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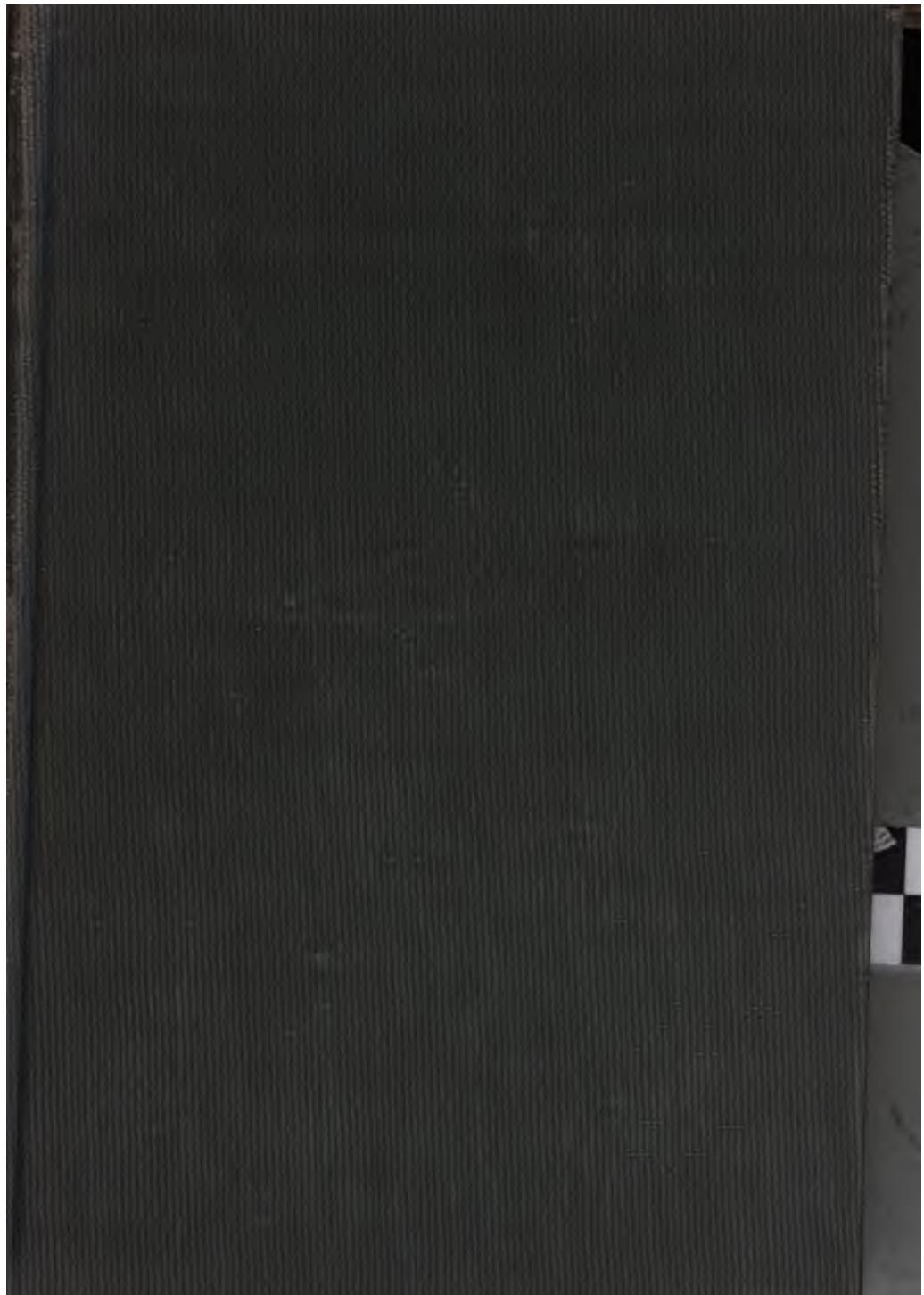
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THE
OLD PLANTATION,

AND

WHAT I GATHERED THERE IN AN AUTUMN
MONTH.

BY JAMES HUNGERFORD,
OF MARYLAND.

"From grave to gay, from lively to severe."

"I will a plain unvarnish'd tale deliver,"
 "Nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice."

NEW YORK:
HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,
FRANKLIN SQUARE.

1859.

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TO

MY AGED MOTHER,

MRS. SOPHIA W. HUNGERFORD,

WHOSE MEMORY, LIKE MY OWN, LINGERS FONDLY AROUND THE
OLD PLANTATION WHERE SHE GAVE ME EXISTENCE,
AND CHERISHED, WITH WATCHFUL AFFECTION,
MY TENDER YEARS, THIS,
MY FIRST BOOK,

Is Inscribed,

WITH LOVE AND REVERENCE.



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THE OLD PLANTATION.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE RIVER.

Flight from the Cholera.—The Schooner Lily Ann.—The Passengers.—The Man of “Sperrit.”—The White Squall.—Alarming Tableau.—“Coming to.”

IN the summer of 1832 the Asiatic cholera raged fearfully in Baltimore. From the beginning of July till nearly the end of August the number of deaths daily increased. At that time I was in my twenty-first year, and was, I think, as light-hearted a being as ever breathed. Singularly enough, I had no dread of the pestilence; and being engaged in the study of the law, to which I was enthusiastically attached, it was with some reluctance that I heard my father announce his intention of closing his city house and removing his family to our country-place in one of the southern counties of Maryland. For my own part, I accepted the invitation of a male cousin of mine, some years older than myself, to pass a month or two at his father's plantation in the same county.

It was in the afternoon of the very day (Tuesday, but I forget the day of the month) on which the cholera reached its culminating point that, after packing up a set of law-books with my baggage, I took passage on board the Lily Ann, a bay craft of some thirty tons burden which plied as a packet between Baltimore and St. Joseph's Creek. There was a steamer which ran to Belleharbor, about twenty miles from the plantation which I was about to visit, but I preferred the packet, not only because she would land me within a few miles of my cousin's residence, but because I was more accustomed to steam-boats and wanted variety. The Lily Ann was lying out in the stream when I came down to the quay, hav-

ing moved there as soon as she had taken on board her freight to have as little communication as possible with the city, in dread of the pestilence. Her jolly-boat, however, was waiting at the wharf for me and my baggage when I came down to the river. A few strokes of the oar brought us alongside; and, as I was the last passenger expected, the anchor was at once weighed, the sails unfurled, and in a few moments after my feet touched the deck the gallant little craft was speeding before a light but steady breeze on her course toward the broad Chesapeake.

It was a bright and almost cloudless afternoon, and warm, as is usual at that season of the year; and as—our course lying east, and the wind being north-northeast—the mainsail made a shade on the small quarter-deck, the passengers were mostly gathered on that part of the vessel. There were only half a dozen or so on board: a young widow lady with her little daughter of four or five years, a planter of the county to which we were going and his wife, a very pleasant-looking gentleman of about sixty years of age, and a few others not requiring particular mention. The ladies were seated in chairs upon the deck; the gentlemen—except myself—occupied the low trunk of the little cabin. I was seated on the stern-board, where, though somewhat retired from the rest, so as not to feel called upon to take part in the conversation, I could hear all that was said.

Passing Lazaretto Point, we left the North Branch of the Patapsco and entered the main river, a short but wide piece of water. Behind us lay Fort M'Henry; on either hand extended the shores of the river, to the north low and rather flat, to the south rising occasionally into sudden cliffs, or retiring into distant eminences, the farm-houses on each side peeping out through frequent openings in the woods that stretched along either shore. Far away, at the distance of ten or twelve miles before us, spread the broad bosom of the Chesapeake; while the waters, far and near, were dotted here and there with the white sails of bay and sea craft; and the white smoke and apparently diminutive bulk of a steamer were seen approaching us in the offing.

"What a delightful evening, and what a beautiful scene!" said the pleasant-looking elderly gentleman; who, from the expression of his countenance, was about to favor us with some moralizing remarks on the theme he had introduced. He was interrupted, however, as soon as he had taken his text, by the planter, a man of apparently about thirty years of age.

"It was very different weather," said the latter, "when I came up to the city, last spring, in the Water Witch. We were going very fast before a stiff gale from the east-south-east, when, before the mouth of Magothy River, a sudden squall struck us from a precisely opposite direction; and, before you could say 'Jack Robinson,' the vessel was on her beam-ends. The black fellow who was at the helm let go the tiller and seized hold of the cabin-door to keep himself from falling; and if I hadn't rushed, on the impulse of the moment, to the helm and put it 'hard down,' the boat would have capsized in an instant. Tom Smith was on board: you ought to have seen him; I never saw a man so scared in my life. If the captain hadn't seized him he would have finished matters for himself pretty quickly by jumping overboard."

I observed a broad grin on the face of the weather-beaten-looking negro man who stood at the helm near me.

"What is the matter?" I asked of him; "you seem to be amused at the story that gentleman has just told."

"Lor's er marcy, marster," he said, "'taint no story" (falsehood) "at all. I wus a hand on board de Water Witch at de time. Ebry blessed word ob it's true; on'y 'twas Marse Tom Smith dat put de hellum hard down, un Marse Wilson dare dat want to jump overboard."

This remark he followed up by a subdued guffaw, which he tried to conceal in the sleeve of his unoccupied arm.

"I've ollers hearn tell," said Captain Koster, the master of the packet, who was leaning against the "near side" of the mainmast, "that Mister Smith is a man of sperrit."

"You can't tell a man of spirit till he's proved," retorted Mr. Wilson. The truth of which trite remark the speaker himself proved before the coming midnight.

A word or two, by the way, about Captain Koster, although it is not probable that we shall meet with him again during the course of this narrative after we leave his vessel. He was born and "raised" on the shores of the Chesapeake, in the southern part of the county which I was on my way to visit, and was a genuine son of the soil there. The natives of that locality stand, in a moral, and, indeed, in almost every other, point of view, precisely where they stood in the very first settlement of the country. In costume they are peculiar, each one of them arranging himself or herself in such fashion as most accords with the particular notions entertained in the individual instance. The only case in which they have been known to dress "like other people" exists with those who adopt a sea-faring or bay-craft life. They do condescend to adopt a sailor costume when necessary. Their language is a barbarous dialect which I do not undertake to give but a faint idea of; in the case of Captain Koster it was a little softened, indeed, by constant contact with those who spoke more correctly. Yet neither by Captain Koster nor by any other individual born in the locality of which he was a native have I ever heard a grammatical sentence uttered. Such as they are they and their forefathers have been "since time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary;" and let it be known to their praise, too, that they have been always distinguished for honesty—pity it is that truth requires me to add that they are not and never have been at all remarkable for either industry or sobriety. To conclude, they are a race *sui generis*, and, in the elegant language of Mr. Montague Tigg, "none but themselves can begin to come up to them."

The vessel glided before the light breeze, with a softly undulating motion, on her course down the bright Patapsco. Conversation continued among the passengers, varied occasionally by a song from one of the ladies accompanied by the sweet notes of a guitar which she had purchased in the city. Reclined as I was upon the stern-board the voices and the music, mingled with and softened by the soothing sound of the rippling water under me, lulled me into that dreamy state of mind so pleasant and yet so difficult to describe. The soft

wind fanned my cheek, the blue sky, varied here and there by a light cloud, bent over me. Under these charming influences, my waking dreams were of course full of hope and light—such dreams as, in an earthly point of view, only youth can know. All the day-dreams of that romantic age, if allowed to go on uninterruptedly, will, sooner or later, like tributaries to a central stream, flow into the great river of Love. And thus it was with me and my musings. No lady-love had I; the sun had not yet set, nor, of course, had the light-houses exhibited their beacons; and yet—anticipatory of all these events—and without having the patience to wait for even the latter two of them, whose coming would have been so soon—I wrought out the following lines, for the romantic folly of which even the excuse of being in love would not have been sufficient. And yet, who would not consent to forego the wisdom acquired by years and be willing to bear all the ridicule that attaches to the follies of youth, to be again young and to be happy once more in those youthful imaginings that,

“Like those frail exhalations which the dawn
Robes in its golden beams,”

vanish as the day of life advances?

THE LONELY BEACON-LIGHT.

TO * * *

Swift on her course the vessel hies,
The shades of night have closed around,
Thick clouds have gathered in the skies,
And through the gloom no star is found;
Yet, still to guide him on his way,
Beams cheering on the sailor's sight,
O'er the dark waters of the bay,
The lonely beacon-light.

And thus, as sweeps my venturesome bark
Adown life's wild and stormy stream,
While sorrow's clouds are lowering dark
And set in tempest fortune's beam;
Still turns to thee my trusting heart,
And, 'mid misfortune's deepest night,
It hails thee, as thou truly art,
My lonely beacon-light.

The just reader will infer from my presenting him with this specimen from my youthful muse that, while describing the follies and other peculiarities of others, I have no design of sparing myself. This by way of note.

I was aroused from my abstraction by a word used in a colloquy between the captain and the negro helmsman ; for I had learned what "a squall" indicated. I found that we were passing out of the mouth of the river, and that the wind had considerably increased.

"Cap'n Koster," asked the helmsman, "ain't dat a squall dat I see out on de bay dare, jes turrer side er Norf Pint?"

"Looks sump'n like it, Cudjer," was the answer ; "a putty heavy rifle any how. Keep a sharp look out den. Seems to me we'll have to take in sail'fore long. The breeze is stiff'nin' right smart."

"Tain't gwine fur ter hurt de Lily Ann, sah, ef it on'y stiffen reg'lar. Dem ugly squalls is all dat I'm 'fraid ob. De wind blowed heabier dan dis las' time we come up de bay, un we hab on ebry rag ur sail, same as dis time—mains'l, fo's'l, two jibs, un two gaf-tops'l's, un—"

"There comes a squall now," interrupted the Captain, "right off uggin yer larboard bow!" And in an instant after he added, in a voice that sounded like a shriek, "Down with yer hellum ; hellum hard alee!"

The warning came too late. The first evidence I had of this fact was "finding myself" pitched by a violent jerk from the stern-board into the—not into the water, but into the jolly-boat, which, fortunately for me, was suspended from the davits at the stern. Springing instantly to my feet I climbed upon deck. The scene presented there was not by any means cheering. The vessel was careened over so much that the lower parts of the mainsail and foresail were lying flat upon the water which came over the rail on the starboard side. The deck on that was very nearly perpendicular, and even on the larboard side it was too steep to stand upon without holding on to something. Several of the passengers, male and female, were piled in a heap against the windward side of the cabin-trunk. The widow lady and her little girl were on

their knees ; what could they, so helpless, do at such a time but look to Heaven for help ? I still see vividly "in my mind's eye" those sweet faces—the child looking to her mother, the mother to Heaven. The child's face expressed mingled trust and terror as she clung to her mother ; even in this unusual danger she still looked with confidence for help where it had never been refused. The ruling expression of the mother's face, as her arm clasped her child, was the great emotion of imploring but trustful prayer ; while over it there passed a breath of intense alarm, like a ripple over the surface of a wave, stirred by some far mightier impulse. The soul was in the prayer, the body alone in the terror. The pleasant-looking elderly gentleman was holding on to the larboard rail with one arm, while with the other he supported the planter's wife who had fainted. Not the slightest trace of terror or even alarm was in that man's face ; but it was lighted up with the expression of a sublime courage which evidently had a higher source than himself. Looking upon his countenance at that moment you could not doubt that the accidents of time and life had no power to shake the firmness and reliance of his soul. The planter himself, Mr. Wilson, had by some chance—most probably, in an effort to reach the cabin door—tumbled down against the leeward rail of the boat, where he was making exertions to climb up the deck, exertions that were evidently merely instinctive ; for his expanded nostrils, wide open and staring eyes, gaping mouth, and outstretched fingers, showed that all mind was gone except the sensation of unqualified terror. He succeeded at length in reaching the door of the cabin into which he madly plunged head-foremost ; there, of course, should the boat be capsized he was certain of being drowned. The captain, holding firmly on by the larboard shrouds of the mainmast and his weather-beaten face showing intense anxiety, was shouting to the helmsman at the extent of his lungs in order to be heard above the uproar of the waves which were wildly dashing all around us and the loud and melancholy dirge which the wind was singing in the cordage,

"Hard down yer hellum, Cudjer, hard down yer hellum!"

"Hard down it is, marster," said the faithful negro, clinging with one hand to the leeward railing and with the other to the tiller, and preserving his respect for his captain even in this extremity.

I have taken pages to relate what occurred in an instant.

"Does she answer any, Cudjer?" asked the captain.

"Not as I ken see, marster," was the reply.

Understanding what was meant by a kind of instinct, I looked to the water, sky, and opposite shore of the bay to seek some object in a line with the masts, by which to learn whether the vessel was "answering" or obeying her helm. Before I had succeeded the helmsman exclaimed to the captain,

"She's comin', sah!"

"Thank God!" exclaimed the captain; "all's safe. She'll soon put her bowsprit in the wind's eye."

The sails shortly began to flutter; and the gallant little vessel, "coming up" with her head to the wind, "righted" and shook herself. The squall had passed; the helm was put aport, and in a few minutes the Lily Ann was "laying her course" down the Chesapeake before a stiff "three-quarter" breeze. The danger had hardly been realized before it was past.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE BAY.

The Widow and her Child.—Mr. Worthington.—Groupings.—Christianity and Skepticism.—"Possum's" Wrongs.—The Man of "Sperrit" in a Quandary.—The Supernatural.

THINGS soon assumed the same appearance upon deck which they had presented before the squall. Conversation, however, did not for some time flow as freely as it had previously done. The so recent and sudden escape from an overwhelming danger still blanched the cheeks of some and made all look serious. The young lady who had sung was leaning

pensively on her guitar, thinking, perhaps, how unhappy some favored lover might have been made by that evening's events. Mrs. Wilson, the planter's wife, had recovered from her fainting fit, but still looked pale, though composed. The widow lady was talking soothingly to her little girl who sat upon her lap. Drawn by one of those inexpressibly tender feelings, whose demonstration can seldom be resisted, I crossed the deck to them, and, uttering to the mother some words of congratulation on our escape, took one of the hands of the little girl in mine and bent over her. She held her sweet baby lips up for a kiss, seeming to understand the feeling expressed in my face. Many years have passed since then; but that fair and pure young face, expressive of all gentler emotions and framed in soft and golden curls as in a "glory," is still like a picture before me. Though I have often seen her since I remember her best as she then appeared.

The pleasant-looking elderly gentleman was standing by the mainmast shrouds looking into the water, when I crossed the deck; but, on hearing my voice, he turned around and came up to me, greeting me with a pleasant smile. After saying a few kind words to the interesting mother and child, he placed his arm within mine, and we walked toward the stern of the vessel.

"A crisis like that which has just passed," he observed, "serves, perhaps, as well as any event that can happen, to bring out traits of character, especially strength and weakness, selfishness and unselfishness. I was pleased with your bearing. You seemed to have your senses about you."

I was much pleased with this praise from one whom I had already learned to respect so much; yet I did not feel convinced that I deserved it. There was something wrong about the matter; and yet he did not seem to be a man who would utter idle compliments.

"I can not claim the praise you have bestowed upon me," I said; "and perhaps you did not so mean it. Courage and cowardice are constitutional; and we merit no credit for the one, as we deserve no reproach for the other. After all, I was only looking around to see how matters stood, and to be

ready to make use of any means that might offer to save myself. Your self-collection was something of a much higher order. I do not understand it; there was no anxiety about it. I felt assured that you would have met death with as calm a mien as you bear now. How is this? Will you tell me?"

"My young friend," he answered, "I am naturally of a very timid disposition. When at your age I should have exhibited, in an event like that which has just occurred, as much alarm as, or perhaps even more than, was shown by the poor gentleman whom you see coming out of the cabin."

The unfortunate Mr. Wilson was, indeed, just then creeping out of the cabin door, seeming much chagrined and looking shyly around, as if he wished to get into place among those upon deck without attracting attention. He did look very pitiful, indeed; and yet I could not help smiling when I saw him. The old gentleman continued his discourse:

"I am much changed since then. Now I can be calm in the face of danger, because I do not fear death. I do not think I say this in any feeling of vainglory. If I do, I do wrong; for it is to God that the praise is due, since it is in His strength that I am fearless. I am not afraid of death, because I do not fear the hereafter."

"You belong, I suppose, to those who consider themselves sanctified, and have no doubt of gaining Heaven," I remarked; and not even the remembrance of his proved fearlessness of death could prevent me from giving the remark some slight expression, at least, of a sneer. "I confess," I continued, "that, for my part, I have not much faith in such matters."

"So young, and a skeptic!" exclaimed the old gentleman, and actually with a smile on his face, and a kind smile, too; "I am still more interested in you. Pardon me for asking your name and residence."

"My name is Clarence Audley," I answered; "I reside in Baltimore, but am now on my way to visit my uncle, the Hon. John Weatherby, who lives at Old Delight, near St. Joseph's."

"I am glad to learn of your visit," was the reply; "I live but a few miles from Old Delight. My name is Worthington. We shall, I hope, have opportunities of meeting again."

The ringing of the supper-bell here interrupted our conversation. We were making progress rapidly before the freshened breeze. The setting sun was gilding the spire of the State House at Annapolis, which was still far to the southwest, and kindling with rosy flames the stirred waters of the broad Chesapeake, as we descended into the cabin to partake of the evening meal.

The cabin was divided into two apartments; the inner, or forward one, was reserved for the ladies; the after, or outer one, had berths for the gentlemen. In this outer cabin the table was spread with an inviting meal. But, although the door between the two cabins and the outer door of each were left open, and the sky-lights were thrown back to admit the air, the atmosphere below was so much warmer than that above, that the passengers were not long in dispatching supper, and immediately after the conclusion of that meal again adjourned to the deck. The moon, nearly at the full, was already apparent in the sky, but not yet cresting the waves with silver; and golden hues still made beautiful the cloud-architecture of sunset.

The passengers scattered themselves over the deck; some gathered in groups, others sauntering idly about, looking sometimes at the sunset sky, sometimes at the sails making soft pulsations to the wooing of the breeze, sometimes at the waters keeping dreamily their course with ours before a fresh and fair breeze. Mr. Worthington and myself again fell together.

"So sweet an evening and so lovely a scene as this," he remarked, "seem to make us at peace, for the time, with both earth and Heaven."

"Yes," I said; "at such a time it appears, indeed,

"As if blessings, like the even,
Softly fell on earth from Heaven.'

But, excuse my curiosity, you seemed just now not to be offended, as religious men, as far as my experience shows, would invariably be at my supposed skepticism. How is this? Do you yourself believe in the Bible?"

"I believe in it as I do in my own existence," he answered. "But the strongest faith comes with the just exercise of the

reasoning faculties; and he who is an honest skeptic will, eventually, become a true Christian."

"It gives me much delight to hear you say so," I observed. "It holds out to me a hope that you may be able to give me rational grounds for a belief in the truth of Christianity. Till a few years ago I took it for granted that the Christian doctrines were true. I had not, indeed, investigated the subject, had scarcely, in fact, given it any consideration. At the age of fourteen I fell in with a copy of 'Volney's Meditations on the Ruins of Empires.' Since that time I have been harassed by doubts. There are some states of the mind, especially in moments of mental stillness, when I feel drawn, involuntarily as it were, toward the Bible; but reason tells me that some of the doctrines of Christianity—at least, as we hear them preached—are opposed to common sense, to the experiences of the intellect; or, to speak in the language of the schools, are contrary to 'the fitness of things.'

"In an intellectual point of view," said Mr. Worthington, "the true Christian religion is but little known. The genuine religion of the heart is felt and acknowledged, more or less, every where, even in the darkest Pagan lands; for 'this is the True Light that lighteth *every* man that cometh into the world.' The Lord is God of the heathen as well as of the Christian, and in the full strength of the words; and it is a false system that teaches any thing contrary to this truth; for otherwise God, so far from being merciful, would not even be just. But 'His loving mercy is over *all* His works.' Christianity, my young friend, is, when properly understood, a divine philosophy, not only asking no faith in any thing contrary to common sense, but teaching the profoundest truths so that the lowliest as well as the loftiest intellect may not only believe but comprehend them, and throwing light upon all things in both the physical and mental worlds. He who listens to her instructions properly expounded, in a spirit of sincere and earnest inquiry, will find that all the experiences of his life—all that he has learned by reading, conversation, observation, thought—will come around him to testify, 'This is the Truth.'"

My desire to hear Mr. Worthington's views of Christianity seemed doomed to be thwarted. The interruption was caused, this time, by a loud and general laugh among the passengers. My companion hastily added,

"You must come and see me at Cedar Park; there I will converse with you to your heart's content on this subject. As I said, 'tis but a few miles from your uncle's residence; we both live in Chittering Neck Hundred. Come, let us join these good folks, and see what amuses them."

The object that immediately attracted our attention, as having caused the merriment which had disturbed our discourse, was the cabin-boy, a little negro fellow of apparently about eight or nine years of age. His dress consisted of coarse thick linen trowsers, a blue-and-white checked shirt open at the throat, a black tarpaulin hat, and a pair of low-priced pumps without stockings. The shirt and trowsers had evidently been recently donned in a clean state; but they were far from being so now. Certain large patches of grease and blacking very much marred their neatness. The face and hands were also pretty well plastered, in large and frequent spots, with the same materials. The boy was a genuine specimen of the Ethiopian race, having a jet-black face, a broad and flat nose, large fleshy lips, the under one of which protruded a little beyond the other; teeth large and somewhat projecting, and as white as ivory; and a mass of woolly hair that, by frequent use of a coarse comb, was made to stand out some inches from his head.

This queer-looking little fellow was standing in a circle of the passengers, in a high state of angry excitement. He held in his right hand a greasy-mouthed brown stone jug, and in his left a tin can, the bottom and sides of which were smeared within with some black compound. These vessels he was shaking with passionate vehemence at his scoffers, while his eyes rolled furiously from one to the other of the passengers, as every now and then the laugh was renewed in different quarters. Several times he made an effort to speak to the captain, but was unable to do so on account of the violence of his excitement. At length his passion found vent in words.

"Jes look er here, cap'n," he said, "jes see what somebody's

gone un done done. Ebery blessed drap uv de ile spilt ; ebery bit uv de blackin' done all wasted. Un dere's my cuddy, dat wus so clean, all smeared ober and ober wid de ile un de blackin'. Un jes see my shirt un trowsers, dat I put on dis eben-in' so clean to wait on de table in ; jes look at um now—spilet fureber ; neber git dat dirt out in dis worl'. What d'ye think uv dat dare now ? Dese ladies un gen'lim wouldn' laugh so ef dey had deir shirt un trowsers all greased un dirtied ober und ober in dat dare way, I s'pose."

The captain had joined with the passengers in the laugh at the little black fellow's vehemence, and at the queer figure he made ; but his laugh did not appear to me entirely hearty. Probably he sympathized with the boy's vexation a little on account of the waste of the oil being his own loss. The blacking was probably the little negro's property, and a speculation of his own in his capacity of boot-black for the passengers. So after a while he requested silence while he investigated the affair.

"Who's gone and spilt them things, 'Possum ?" he asked, "Who d'yer think could 'er done it ?"

"Dat's jes what I cum fur ter find out, sah," said 'Possum, "Dere wus er gen'lum down dere in de cabin dere when de squall come, er tryin' fur ter stuff hisself away inter de cuddy. I s'pose he mus' 'er done it."

"Did yer see what kind er lookin' pusson that gen'leman was, 'Possum ?" asked the captain, with a sly leer at Mr. Wilson and a wink at the rest of us.

"I wus too much took't up wid der squall, sah, ter make any obserwe," was the answer ; "but dere wasn't but one gen'lum down dere den, un, in course, he must 'er ben de pusson, sah. Seems ter me Marster Wilson dere looks like 'um."

"It couldn't 'er ben Mr. Wilson, 'Possum ; Mr. Wilson's a man er sperrit." And the captain lengthened his face out in order to look very serious. "Why times er squalls is the werry time for *his* sperrit ter show itself. He ollers has the mos' sperrit jes when a vessel is hove down by the wind right on ter her beam ends. Aint it so, Mr. Wilson ? Why, you told us so yerself this very arternoon. Didn't yer ?"

Mr. Wilson, as we could still see, although the twilight was fast growing dim and mingling with the soft moonlight, turned red in the face and looked away; then he straightened himself, put his hands into his pockets, and made an effort to whistle.

"Why, you see, captain," he at length said, "why, you see the fact is—that is, I mean—I went down into the cabin to see if I could find a smelling-bottle or something of that sort for my wife, who was sick, you know."

"Of course, yer done it fur that," said the captain; "un yer was naterally in a mighty hurry. We all saw yer was in such a hurry that yer was nigh on to fallin' overboard. But *you* don't git scared un do them things; Tom Smith's the man fur that. Un yer not coming back tell the squall wus over is naterally accounted fur by yer waitin' fur ter try fur ter wipe up the spilt ile un blackin' with the tail of yer new broadcloth frock-coat."

Mr. Wilson succeeded in putting a stop to the captain's banter by promising to pay damages, and thoroughly pacified the young African by presenting him with a half dollar, which sent him, grinning and bowing and pulling a lock of hair on his forehead, back to his duties below deck.

"I say, little fellow," I asked, slipping a small silver coin into his hand, as he passed me at the cabin door, "why do they call you 'Possum?'"

"'Cause I'se so fond of 'simmons, sah," was the laconic reply, as he plunged down the steep cabin steps.

As the last hours of twilight faded from the western sky, and the pale and melancholy moonlight, like a spectral day, made quaint and ghastly lights and shadows upon the waters, and exhibited the distant shores in mystic outlines, conversation, taking its flow from the scene and the hour, turned into the channel of the supernatural. A number of stories about ghosts and witches were told; but the following, related by Captain Koster, appeared to me the only one worth preserving. I have, for obvious reasons, discarded the language used by the worthy captain in relating it and substituted my own.

"I never knew a woman," said the captain, by way of

preface, "who knowed more ghost-stories and had more faith in um than Betsy Pantry, who used for ter tell me this here story that I'm er gwine fur ter tell you that happened fur sartin to her own husband that wus. Poor Joe is ben dead now gwine on ter fifteen year; and Betsy's ben married uggin now this three or four year. But that's nyther here nor there."

CHAPTER III.

JOE PANTRY AND THE WITCHES.

The Devil's Wood-yard.—“Sober as a Judge.”—The Invisible Riders.—The Magic Bridle.—“Man and Horse.”—The Witch-gathering.—Joe “Himself Again.”—Unhoped for dénouement.—Conversation on the Tradition.—“Tired Nature's Sweet Restorer.”

ALONG the shores of the Chesapeake, some miles above the mouth of the Clearwater, lies an extensive tract of forest land to which tradition—its origin long since forgotten—has given the name of “The Devil's Wood-yard.” Whether his infernal majesty ever made use of the right, which its title seems to concede to him, of appropriating the wood of this forest to keeping up the heat of his dominions, we have no means of knowing. If he ever did so, it must have been at a period so far in the past as to have allowed the timber an undisturbed répose of upward of a hundred years; for, although modern enterprise and love of money-making have sent the axe into the very centre of the forest, yet at the time of which I write there was no evidence that the wood-cutter had committed any ravages in its fastnesses for at least a century. It is not improbable, indeed, that it had never been used by the settlers either during or since the earliest days of the colony; nor is it wonderful that, when wood and land were so plentiful, a place like this should be left unmolested.

There could scarcely be a more impenetrable wilderness. Seldom, except in the winter days when the branches were bare of leaves, did the sunshine have an opportunity of looking into its secret places. Briers and various undergrowth

filled up the spaces between the trees ; and over and among these lay, at frequent intervals, vast piles of decaying trunks. The ground, too, on which the forest stood was almost one continuous swamp ; either because of numerous springs, or because the rain-water, being restrained from oozing through the soil on account of its clayey base, and receiving but little heat from the sunshine to cause it to evaporate, remained where it fell, or, still more probably, on both accounts. Serpents of various kinds, venomous and otherwise, gathered upon the few dry spots, or dragged their slimy lengths along the dead trunks in search of prey. And here it is said the most ferocious wild animals found an abiding place long after they had disappeared from the surrounding country.

The residence of Mr. Pantry was not far from the head of Mill Creek, some miles from the nearest part of the Devil's Wood-yard. Being a poor man, he often hired himself to do a day's work or more to "some one or other" of his more fortunate neighbors.

One day in harvest time he had been employed in a wheat-field at the distance of one or two miles from his home, and, as he afterward told his wife, had left a little after sundown ; and although it is known that whisky is always plentiful on such occasions, and Mr. Pantry did not deny a penchant for that particular drink, yet he assured his confiding better half that he withheld the temptation, and started for home, as he expressed himself, "as sober as a judge." It may be thought by some suspicious or censorious persons that Mr. Pantry used this expression for the very purpose of leaving himself a hole to creep out at, for even learned judges are not always the most sober men in the world. Whether this opinion be correct or not, Mrs. Pantry herself, who certainly had more right than any other person to be interested in her husband's condition, was perfectly convinced of his entire sobriety at the time spoken of.

It was a calm and beautiful evening as Mr. Pantry trudged merrily along on his homeward way. The moon rode high in the cloudless heavens, shedding her mild light over the broad path before him, and over the surrounding fields, and silvering

the tops of the distant forest trees. No incident worthy of note occurred to him until he entered the green and narrow lane that led to his house. Then he heard a loud clattering sound behind him, as of the hoofs of many horses approaching in a gallop. Startled at a noise so unexpected at that place and hour, he looked back to learn the cause of it, and what he then beheld might well have shaken the strongest nerves. Along the straight path crossing the wide "old field" which he had just left, he saw distinctly in the clear moonlight a long row of red caps, at the height of about seven or eight feet above the ground, coming toward him at a rapid rate. As they approached, the confused sound of many voices talking at the same time and frequent bursts of wild laughter mingled with the noise of the trampling hoofs. He could no longer doubt that a troop of invisible riders was bearing down upon him.

Half dead with terror, he had only strength to shrink back closely into a corner of the zigzag fence which bordered the lane ere the main body of the gang passed by him, bearing with them a blast as fierce as a whirlwind and as hot as the breath of a sirocco.

Thinking that all had passed by he began to feel to a slight degree relieved, but as the sound of hoofs died away in one direction he heard it a second time approaching in the other. Looking again toward the old field path, he saw two more red caps coming toward him, and so near were they to each other that he felt assured their wearers were mounted on the same horse. This also accounted for their being behind the rest of the troop. When they arrived opposite to the corner of the fence in which our hero was ensconced they suddenly halted. Mr. Pantry was now almost senseless with dismay. He would have cried aloud, but his tongue, though generally glib enough, refused to perform its accustomed office,

"Seteruntque comæ,
Et vox faucibus hæsit."

The invisibles, however, seemed to give no attention whatsoever to his terror.

"Jack," said a harsh voice, "here is a steed for you."

"Yes," answered another voice; "with your horse relieved of my burden, and a fresh steed for me, we shall not be far if at all behind the others."

"Make haste and mount," was the rejoinder, "and let us be off."

Mr. Pantry then heard a jingling sound over his head, while some one pronounced, in a deep coarse voice, the dreadful words,

"Bridle of the magic spell,
Given by the prince of hell,
Change, by thy mysterious force,
This mortal man into a horse."

Instantly Mr. Pantry found himself transformed into a courser ready saddled and bridled. At his side, with one foot in the stirrup, in the very act of mounting upon his back, was a swarthy man, with a long, black beard, and eyes that gleamed with a red light through tangled elf-locks. A red cap was on his head. At a short distance was a figure identical in appearance mounted upon a coal-black horse.

"Away!" they cried, and our hero felt the rowels sink deeply into his flank, and in a moment he was bounding forward as if endowed with supernatural strength.

They were soon out of the lane, then over a fence into a corn-field, tearing down and trampling upon the tall stalks, then immediately over another fence into the woods.

"They stayed not for brake, and they stopp'd not for stone."

Over bush, over brier they went; through overhanging boughs of the dense wood; down the steep ravine to the marsh at the head of Mill Creek; through the mud and water of the marsh that came up to the knees; up the steep bank on the other side; and then into and through another dense forest, that, with occasional clearings, sweeps far across to the Chesapeake.

But the worst was yet to come—they entered the Devil's Wood-yard. Mr. Pantry never could clearly tell how he got through this. It was like the terrific struggling in a wild dream of madness and misery. The wild beasts, aroused from their slumber, growled and yelled after them as they flew by.

The huge snakes, crushed by the dashing hoofs, hissed at them with rage and pain. But nothing checked their reckless speed until they gained the summit of a small hill which arose, cleared of trees, in the midst of that dismal forest. Here, strange to relate, stood the ruins of a small frame building, with a yard in front of it surrounded by dilapidated palings. Who built this house, or why it was built in such a singular spot, Mr. Pantry could not tell. Certain it is that no one had ever heard of it before, or has ever seen it since.

A bright light gleamed out from the windows of the building. The rest of the troop had, evidently, already arrived, for many horses were tied to the yard palings. Our hero and his black companion were made fast in like manner, and their riders entered the house.

Wild bursts of merriment came from that old ruin, the song, the shout of laughter, and the shrill sound of the violin, while the stamp of dancing feet made the windows rattle again. Mr. Pantry, notwithstanding his extraordinary transformation, still retained enough of his old nature about him to feel a restless desire to see what was going on in the house. Impelled by this curiosity, he struggled fiercely to free himself from the palings. In making this attempt he slipped his bridle, and, to his great and inexpressible delight, found himself again in his own natural shape.

The reader will probably suppose that Mr. Pantry's first thought was to free his companions. Such an idea did occur to him; yet, though he had but little doubt that they were unfortunate human beings in a metamorphosed state, his curiosity got the better of his humanity, and he immediately concluded to postpone their enfranchisement until he had seen what was taking place in the house. Taking the bridle in his hand, he walked to the nearest window and looked in. There was but one room, quite a large one, in the house, at one side of which was a platform raised some feet above the floor. On this platform sat Old Nick himself, with hoof and tail as described in ancient legends. There was no candle or lamp in the room; the light, which was of a red glow, came from the throne of his Satanic majesty. Around it the wizards and

witches were dancing and shouting, and sometimes bending in fantastic homage.

Mr. Pantry had barely time to make these observations, ere his presence at the window was discovered. The witches gave a wild shriek, mingled with deep oaths from the wizards, and the light was immediately extinguished. Out they poured through the widely opened door, and marched in a body toward our terrified hero.

The love of life preserved to Mr. Pantry some little presence of mind. Even in his desperation he thought of the bridle in his hand, and, when the wizard who had ridden him approached to secure him again, he shook it toward his former master and hastily uttered the spell.

Immediately, with the piercing sound of an unearthly lamentation, and a noise and a shock like those of an earthquake, all the others had vanished ; but by his side stood a coal-black steed, saddled and bridled. Placing his hand upon the mane and leaping into the saddle, Mr. Pantry exclaimed,

"I brought you here, and you shall take me to the place where you found me."

Away sprang the strong steed as fleetly as the wind. Down the hillside he rushed and plunged into the heavy swamp, tearing through the briers and brushwood, and leaping the dead trunks that crossed his way ; while the downward tendency branches of the trees lacerated the face and hands of the rider, and inflicted heavy blows upon his sides and legs. No part of him was free from bruises.

It seemed that our hero had more power of endurance while in the form of a horse, than when in his own proper shape. He had often heard that all evil spells were broken by the utterance of a holy name ; and as he wished to see his wife and home again, and considered that an event so much to be desired might depend upon his avoiding his usual ejaculations, he endeavored to preserve silence. But a union of untoward circumstances was too much for his fortitude. While his steed was dashing on almost up to his flanks in the mire, he felt the cold body of a large snake coiling around his legs. At the same instant a branch struck him on the head, a brier smote

him in the face, and the mud from the plunging hoofs was dashed into his eyes.

"Heaven help me!" he exclaimed.

He remembered nothing more, except having a dim impression of falling headlong to the ground, while the steed rushed onward.

When he again opened his eyes the morning sun was shining brightly around him. He was lying in the fence corner of a narrow green lane; and, on rising and looking over the fence, he beheld his own snug little home and his wife standing in the doorway looking anxiously forth.

The reader will, doubtless, remember that Mrs. Pantry was fond of stories of the supernatural, and will naturally suppose that her husband was aware of this peculiarity in her character. Upon this remembrance he will probably base a certain hypothesis—which hypothesis I will not by any means admit; because, in the first place, it would destroy a very pretty story of diablerie, and, in the second place, it would cast a gross reflection on Mrs. Pantry's judgment.

"In southern Maryland," remarked Mr. Worthington, on the conclusion of the captain's story, "the ignorant and uneducated, whether black or white, have great faith in the might of the Evil One and his servants. They believe that wizards and witches have power over human beings, when in a state of slumber, to transform them into horses, to remove them from their locked and bolted dwellings, through keyholes, to ride them to the witch meetings, and to return them to their beds and to their own proper shapes again, without ever awaking them. It is held to be almost certain death to awake while under such an evil spell."

"I have heard before," I said, "of such superstitious fancies being much in vogue in the country which I am about to visit. The sense of fatigue which nervous persons in ill health often experience on arising in the morning, is thus accounted for; and if one has had the nightmare because of eating too hearty a supper, no doubt is entertained that he has been ridden during the night by some imp of 'Old Harry.' "

As it was now late the ladies arose to retire. The widow lady, whose little daughter had long since been put to sleep, turned to me, before she descended the cabin stairs, and said, frankly extending her hand,

"Mr. Audley, your mother and myself are old acquaintances ; I have often visited your father's house while a school-girl in Baltimore. You were too young then to remember me now. As I shall land near the mouth of the river I shall probably leave the boat before you are awake in the morning, so I say to you now that should it ever suit your convenience to come into Indian Creek neighborhood—it is but seven or eight miles from your uncle's—I and your little acquaintance, Eveline, shall both be happy to see you."

I thanked her warmly as I cordially pressed the small hand she had placed in mine, and assured her that I would *make* it suit my convenience soon to visit Indian Creek.

The gentlemen did not long remain upon deck after the ladies had left. Half an hour afterward I was asleep in my berth, lulled by the rush of the waters as they washed the hull of the vessel at the distance of a few inches from my ear, and soothed by the softly undulating motion of the boat as she rose and sunk with the waves. It was the light but sound sleep of youth as yet undisturbed by any of the pressing cares of life. No dream came to me, not even to bring the sweet face and fair form of the gentle young widow—with whom, with the susceptibility of my age, I was already somewhat smitten —nor the angel features of the little Eveline. And when I awoke in the morning I felt, so refreshing and invigorating had been the slumber of the night, as if endowed with a new life.

CHAPTER IV.

IN CHITTERING NECK.

St. Joseph's Creek.—Cholera Specifics.—Servants in suggestive Livery.—Uncle Porringer and Crowley.—Pony Pacolet.—Which is the Greater?—Cousin Walter.—Good Times ahead.—Colonel Fitzhugh.

THE schooner had been for some hours at anchor in her proper country haven, and I had been aroused from sleep by a colloquy conducted in a loud tone, and heard distinctly through the open skylight of the cabin, between some person on the shore and the captain of the vessel:

“Lily Ann, ahoy!”

“Aye, aye,” responded the hearty voice of the skipper.
“That you, Porringer?”

“Yes, sah. Marse Clarence Audley come down wid you dis trip, cap'n?”

“Sartinly; soun' asleep now right down in the cabin here.”

“How is de young marster?”

“Fust rate and a half, I tell you. And a fust rate young chap he is hisself too, good-looking un smart, and is got un eye fur the gals” (ladies) “too, min’ I sesso, though he’s ben quiet unnough on board here.”

“Neber min’ dat; plenty er young ladies in de Neck, sah. Marse Wat said de fine win’ yisserday would bring yer down las’ night. Dat’s de reason I come fur Marse Clarence so airly. How is de chollery, cap'n?”

“Perty well, I thank yer; on'y a hundred un ten died the day 'fore we left.”

“Lors er marcy! but dat's orful. Hope he won' come dis way.”

“No sayin’ bout that, Porringer. I never hearn tell, as I knows on, that watermillions un mushmillions un charnel” (channel) “crabs wus ever scarce in Chittering Neck ‘bout this time er year.”

"Why you ain't ur gwine fur ter say, marse cap'n," said Porringer, who was fond of the articles in question, as I subsequently learned, "dat dem's bad fur de cholerry?"

"Sartinly not; them things is *good* fur the cholerer. Ul little will hurt yer some; but ef you eat much 'tis sartin death."

I here interrupted the conversation by making my appearance on deck. The influences that greeted me from the magnificent morning were a feast to the senses, of which the heart and intellect partook as willing guests. The sky was without a cloud, and the rising sun poured out over water and land a flood of mingled golden and rosy light. The vessel was anchored in a small cove which was landlocked on every side. In some places the shores arose in abrupt but not lofty cliffs; in others they softly swelled away into higher and higher undulations. Wood-land and corn-fields and clover-fields diversified the landscape. The morning hymns of the happy birds came across the slightly stirred surface of the little cove, borne by an air rich with the blended fragrance of a thousand sweet things. Even now, when a quarter of a century has passed, I am still thrillingly sensitive to the charming influence of such a scene. How much must I have enjoyed them, then, when every pulse bounded with the happy life of opening manhood! Well might we say "Alas, that life has but one youth!" had we no hope within us that the true youth, the youth of the soul, will be "a joy forever."

The Lily Ann was anchored some twenty or thirty yards from the beach, where a small warehouse, roughly built of pine boards, and intended to hold freight sent to the shore for the vessel during her absence, stood about twenty feet from the water's edge, and in front of a small clearing which was backed by the tall oak and chestnut trees of a continuous forest-land. On the beach before the warehouse were an elderly negro man in a one-horse cart, and a negro boy of ten or twelve years of age, holding an iron-gray pony, handsomely saddled and bridled. Both man and boy were dressed in coarse, but very neat and clean brown linen. Their hats were of straw, having a broad band of red leather, intended as an in-

timation of livery, and which conveyed the information that they were not laborers on the plantation but household servants. Both of these individuals made profound bows and lifted their hats to me when I made my appearance on deck. I returned their salutation by a bow.

"Good morning, captain," I said, taking the proffered hand of the skipper.

"Good mornin', Mr. Audley; a fine mornin', sir."

"It is, indeed, a magnificent morning. What has become of the rest of the passengers?"

"All landed, sir. That sperrited Mr. Wilson und his wife on the bay; Mrs. Macgregor" (the interesting young widow) "at the mouth uv the river; und Mr. Worthington und the rest of um at the mouth of the creek, a mile or so below here."

"Will you do me the favor to put my baggage and myself on shore?"

"Sartinly. But won't you stay un take breakfus' with me fust?"

"No, I thank you. How far is it to Old Delight?"

"Nigh on ter two miles. Won't you take er glass er bitters 'fore you go? what we call here un anter-fogmatic? Taken er mornin's 'fore breakfus', it keeps out the bilyus."

I politely declined the invitation.

The jolly-boat being alongside, my baggage was soon handed into it. When I sprang into the boat—two of the sailors of the vessel having already taken their places at the oars—I was followed by 'Possum.

"I'se gwine ullong wid yer, Marse Clarence," he said.

"To the shore?"

"Yes, sah, un to my marster's, too."

"Do you belong to Uncle Weatherby?" I asked.

"Yes, sah. I'se gwine ter stay at home tell de nex' trip de boat makes, may be longer. Mus' stay wid mammy some uv de time."

A few strokes of the oars brought us to the shore.

Uncle Porringer seemed to be very anxious to exhibit his breeding to the city visitor. He met me at the water's edge; and making me one low bow after another, scraping the ground

the while with either foot alternately, and waving his hat in one hand and a red cotton handkerchief in the other, he said, with a great display of smiles,

"Welcome to Chitterin' Neck, young marster. Hopes you'll hab er pleasant time wid us, sah. Heap uv han'some young ladies in de Neck; un young marster 'll make some er deir hearts ache. Rosy cheeks, un blue eyes, un curly hair, un uv fine figger!" he continued, as if taking an inventory of me; "I tell you *what*, de young ladies will have ter look out. My!" (as if speaking to himself, but loudly enough to be heard very plainly, notwithstanding,) "how he *is* grown, un what er han'some-lookin' young man, to be sure!"

"Come, Uncle Porringer," I said, shaking hands with him the while, and blushing (I felt it) like a bashful school-girl, "you must not flatter me so. Here's a quarter for you, on condition that you do not talk to me so any more."

"Thank you, marster. 'Tain't no flattery, dough; ebery word uv it's de blessed trufe."

"How are all at Uncle Weatherby's?" I asked.

"All well, I thank yer, sah. Marse Wat would 'er come down to meet you hisse'f, on'y he wasn't 'wake when I lef' 'de place.' How is my ole marster un missus, your fader un mudder, sah? un my young marsters un missusses, your broders un sisters, sah?"

"They were all well, I thank you, uncle, when I left them on board the steam-boat, bound for Locust Hill, yesterday morning."

"Glad ter hear it, sah. Come, Crowley," he added, turning to the boy who accompanied him, "le's git de baggage in de cart."

"How d'you do, marster?" said Crowley, lifting his hat as he led the pony to me, preparatory to helping the older negro in removing the baggage. "Marse Wat would 'er sont er more sperrited hoss fur yer, sah, but didden know ubabout yer riding. Tell yer, Marse Clarence, we's got er beautiful young blooded mare, Lady Lightfoot; but Marse Wat won't ride her hisse'f, she's so wile. 'Deed, nobody on de place ken ride her but ole Uncle Meshack, un he aint uffraid er de debil. But

any body ken ride little Pacolet, here," he added, patting the neck of the pony affectionately, "he's so gentle."

The graceful little animal arched his neck, glanced his soft eyes upon the boy, and gave a slight neigh, as if in acknowledgment of the caress. It was evident that Pacolet was a good and gentle pony, and had been kindly nurtured.

"Come, boy," said Uncle Porringer, "'tis gittin' late, hold de stirrup fur de young marster, un den make has'e un help me lif' de trunk into de cart."

Crowley was forestalled in the last mentioned duty, however, by 'Possum. The latter had been standing apart from the rest, with his little bundle in his hand, in a somewhat defiant attitude, evidently chagrined at being taken so little notice of; his arrival having been completely overshadowed by mine. He had now recovered his good-humor, and was glad of an opportunity of drawing attention toward himself in so graceful a way as by rendering a service; so he hastened to Uncle Porringer's help, received a kind greeting from him, and, after the baggage was all arranged in the cart, a very hearty and boisterous one from Crowley. This entirely restored 'Possum's good opinion of himself.

"I 'gun ter think," he said, "dat you didden know nobody no longer. Gittin' proud, you country people down here in de Neck. Fur my part," he added with a consequential air and voice, "*I sails on de water.*"

"Don' you talk uggin country people," retorted Crowley; "ain' Marse Wat country people? ain' de marster country people? Answer me dat. Un s'pose you does sail on de wa-ter, don' I wait on de great people in de house?"

"I'se ben up and down de riber, sah," said 'Possum, in a manner that expressed great superiority. "I'se sailed up and down de Chessumpeake Bay, sah; I'se ben to Baltimur city offun, sah; I'se ben ummong de great folks too, sah; some er de passengers in our scunner."

Uncle Porringer here interposed:

"Hush yer jaw, you young darkies," he said. "Uz for you, 'Possum, no marter where you's ben or who you's seed, you's master's nigger yit. So jump inter de cart wid you bof; it's getting late, I tell you."

We had scarcely started when we met cousin Walter Weatherby. He was mounted on a fine bay horse, which he managed well, and he looked quite handsome, flushed as he was with a rapid gallop through the cool morning air. I received from him a hearty grasp of the hand and a cordial welcome.

Cousin Walter was, in his outer man, a direct contrast to myself. His figure was tall, his hair and eyes were so dark as to be almost black, and his complexion was rather brunette than otherwise.

"You are just in time, Cousin Clarence," he said. "The Misses Sullivan, your old acquaintances, are on a visit to the Neck; and there's a Miss King from Ohio come to see her relations. Festivities will be abundant for some weeks, as every body will be giving them parties. Then there's a camp-meeting in the lower district that begins in a few days. By the way, I owe you an apology for being so late in meeting you here. I was so certain that the anticipated pleasure of seeing you would keep me awake all night that I did not give orders to be aroused this morning. I did happen to fall asleep, however, just before daylight, and so overslept myself."

This was said while we were riding together, and the cart was already out of sight behind us. Our road at first lay for some distance along the shore.

"The cart has taken another road," said Cousin Walter; "this is too narrow for it in some places, and is also by half a mile the farther way of getting home. But, as we have yet an hour or so to breakfast (by which time the family will all be up and ready to receive you), I bring you this way because I know that you are fond of picturesque scenery, which we have all along the shore here; and because the road passes directly by the Spout, a name given to a spring on the shore of this creek, famous for the abundance of its cold and clear water, for the beauty of its surroundings, and also as the scene of Colonel Fitzhugh's celebrated duel, of which, I suppose, you have heard."

"Colonel Fitzhugh's duel! If I have heard of it I do not remember."

"Oh! then you have never heard of it; for, once heard, it is not likely to be forgotten. You have heard Uncle Audley speak of Colonel Fitzhugh, have you not?"

"I think I have. I was so young when we removed to Baltimore and have visited the county so seldom since, and father's attention has been so occupied by his city business, that I am ashamed to say I know much less than I ought about the people and things in my native county. I remember very vividly the school-boy days which I passed at Uncle Weatherby's, when we used to go together to old St. Joseph's Academy, and many a merry time we had together; but nothing else do I distinctly remember about the county. These school-life memories constitute the very *gist*, as our law-books term it, of my knowledge of the county."

"Speaking of our school-days," said Cousin Walter, "do you remember Lizzie Dalton, whom you used to call your sweetheart?"

"To be sure I do. What a sweet little girl she was!"

"She was *that*, and she has grown to be a perfect beauty. By-the-by, Cousin Clarence, how I used to laugh at seeing you and Lizzie walking along together to and from school so quietly and demurely, like grown-up people, while all the rest of us were playing and romping all the way."

"But about Colonel Fitzhugh, Cousin Walter," I interrupted—for, being a rather sensitive youth, to say the least, I did not like to be bantered; "it does seem to me, on reflection, that I have heard of him; but the recollection is very dim."

"Then I shall have to tell you what kind of a person he was, as well as to give you an account of his duel at the Spout. And yet it was not a duel either, correctly speaking, although it is always spoken of as such. But you shall hear."

CHAPTER V.

THE DUEL AT THE SPOUT.

Family Grandeur.—Visiting in State.—Unique Views of Friendship.
—The Challenge.—The Second outgeneraled.

OLD Colonel Fitzhugh was a singular genius, and entertained some very whimsical notions. Descended from a cadet of the noble English house of that name, one who had emigrated to Maryland as secretary to the lord proprietary, he was proud of his family, and held a high opinion of his own personal consequence as head of that family in his native state. His ideas of magnificence, however, were very remarkable, as his ceremonious manner of visiting the few of his neighbors whom he considered aristocratic stock, will show. Among those few my grandfather had the credit of being numbered.

The colonel, at the period alluded to, owned a very large estate in the southern part of the county, at the head of St. John's Creek, now more familiarly known in the neighborhood as Mill Creek. The latter name was derived from a flour-making establishment situated on the principal branch of the creek, from which the colonel exported annually, in his own ships, large quantities of flour direct to London. The place is still occupied by a grist mill, the operations of which are confined to the use of the neighboring plantations. On the summit of a beautiful hill, at the distance of half or three quarters of a mile from the mill, and two or three miles from my grandfather's residence, stood Millmount, the dwelling of Colonel Fitzhugh. Only the blackened ruins of the foundation walls of this house now exist, an emblem of the decayed fortunes of the family.

In those earlier times of the Republic the visits of neighbors in the country were always day-long. I have often heard my father say that whenever Colonel Fitzhugh's family visited grandfather's, a negro boy, dressed in homely livery and mounted on horseback, would appear at the gate of Old Delight be-

fore breakfast (and the breakfast hour was very early in those days) with a message or note to the effect that "Colonel and Mrs. Fitzhugh would do themselves the honor of spending the day with Mr. and Mrs. Weatherby." Then, the hospitable answer being given that "Mr. and Mrs. Weatherby would be very happy to see Colonel and Mrs. Fitzhugh," accompanied by an intimation that the weir had yielded a three-“foot” rock, or (if in season) that a brace of canvas-backs were on hand (for the colonel was something of an epicure), the "servant in livery" would, without farther halt, turn and speed homeward.

Then would begin the note of preparation. If the season was spring or summer, Meshach and Jim were sent to the fields to select a fat lamb, and Jack was off to the river flats to catch crabs. No matter what season it was, Will was hurried away to rake the creek for oysters, and Sam had to slaughter a pig. The commotion among the poultry, also, was great upon such occasions. As for the finny tribe, the weir had already secured a sufficient quantity of them. [Such is the bill of fare on visiting days in the southern part of Maryland even at the present time. What a pity it is that the bilious and the ague should hold their reign of terror over a land in other respects so blest! There the invisible malaria from swamps and marshes, silently advancing over hill and valley, stimulates the enjoyment of life even while destroying its very foundation. C. A.]

About nine o'clock the wild notes of a bugle, heard afar off sounding along the forest road, would announce the approach of the magnificent colonel; and at length the lumbering old family carriage (imported from England) would make its appearance, drawn by four stout horses and attended by a couple of negro out-riders, with coachman and footman of the same sable color, all in their rude homespun livery, and with their leather caps and brass buckles and well-greased faces glistening in the morning sun. Then would follow the ceremonious reception of the host, who, accompanied by his wife, always on such occasions met their visitors at the yard gate. And cordial, though stately, were the greetings that ensued.

It was not only in reference to visiting that Colonel Fitzhugh had singular views. His opinions regarding the demands of friendship were still more unique. In the earlier days of that conflict which lasted so long between the Democratic and Federal parties, he took an active interest in behalf of the former, and more than once, as the choice of that party, represented the county in the state Legislature.

It happened during a political campaign that one of the Federal candidates, for whom the colonel entertained a warm friendship notwithstanding party differences, was unavoidably absent from a meeting at which he had made an engagement to address the people. When it came to his friend's turn to speak, the colonel arose in his stead and delivered a quite enthusiastic Federal discourse, concluding by saying that he had not spoken his own, but his friend's sentiments, and had only done for a friend what he would wish a friend to do for him, were the case reversed.

Notwithstanding this closing apology, a hot-headed young Democrat present was so offended at some severe hits which the speaker had given to his own party, that he sent him a challenge the next morning. But Colonel Fitzhugh, though a humorist, entertained some sterling common-sense views. Among these was the opinion that the practice of dueling was mere murder, and its laws an outrage upon civilization. This opinion was itself a singularity at that time and place. It was a habit on the increase in the country at that period to settle disputes by what are so falsely called the laws of honor. He determined, therefore, to make use of this occasion to check the disposition toward this evil habit by teaching his irascible antagonist "a lesson" which would not soon be forgotten.

"Mr. Cheston," said the colonel to the bearer of the note, "it is hardly worth while to remark that your friend has selected a most extraordinary cause of quarrel. That is a fact very apparent. Nevertheless" (seeing that he was about to be interrupted), "far be it from me to refuse to give satisfaction to a gentleman, even for an imaginary offense. I believe that I am entitled, as the challenged party, to the choice of time, place, and weapons."

"Undoubtedly."

"I will meet your friend, then, at six o'clock to-morrow morning at the Spout on St. Joseph's Creek."

"But, my dear sir, your selection of the ground is extraordinary. It is usual for gentlemen of Maryland, who have an affair of honor to settle, to cross the Potomac, or to visit the Federal District. Should we fight at the place you mention, we should be in danger from the laws."

"I should suppose, my dear sir, that Mr. Brougham, in calling a meeting of this kind, had it not in view to avoid danger of any description." (This was said sarcastically.) "If I am willing to face the peril of the laws, I do not see why your friend should be scrupulous. It is useless, however, to argue the point. You have just conceded that I have the right of selecting the place of meeting. I definitely select the Spout on St. Joseph's Creek. If your friend has not well considered the possible consequences to result from my privileges as the challenged party, and fully prepared himself to meet me at all hazards, he has been too hasty in sending his cartel."

"I am answered, Colonel Fitzhugh," said Mr. Cheston, rather haughtily; "Mr. Brougham shall meet you at the place assigned. What weapons shall we bring? and to whom am I referred as your friend?"

"To the latter question, I answer, 'Dr. Somers.' As to the weapons, I shall consult upon that subject with my friend, and may probably not be able to let you know my decision until we meet upon the ground."

"But, my dear sir, you forget that in such a contingency we should not know what arms to bring with us. And I insist that we have a right to know at once."

"I hardly know how to understand you, Mr. Cheston. You say that I have the privilege of appointing time, place, and weapons, and yet will not allow me the free use of that privilege. The right to make a choice implies the right to have time to consider."

"If the time is short, Colonel Fitzhugh, it is of your own appointing."

"I am sure that neither you nor Mr. Brougham would desire it to be longer."

A touch of sarcasm was contained in this. The colonel knew the hot-headed youngster he had to deal with.

"As to having the arms on the ground, Mr. Cheston," he continued, "you need entertain no fears on that point. I shall bring with me the weapons I select; and, to avoid all implication, your friend shall have the first choice."

"But they may be such as Mr. Brougham has not been accustomed to, and he may need some practice."

"I shall take no advantage, Mr. Cheston," said the colonel proudly. "The arms I select shall be such as your friend has been as much accustomed to as myself; and I pledge you my word as a gentleman, that I shall not practice with them till we practice together to-morrow morning."

Mr. Cheston, though not by any means satisfied, made no farther objections, for fear of being misunderstood. The colonel had carried his point, a very important one, as the sequel will show.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DUEL AT THE SPOUT—*Concluded.*

The Spout on St. Joseph's Creek.—Novel Preparations for the Combat.—Unsatisfactory Satisfaction.—Victory and Defeat.—Logical Results.

[THE place appointed for the hostile meeting owes its name to a fountain of cool and pellucid water that flows from the bank of the St. Joseph's near to where that stream unites with the Clearwater River. The creek just above its mouth expands into a wide and beautiful sheet of water some miles in length, which, being landlocked at either extremity, presents the appearance of a very picturesque little lake, with banks in some places sloping to the margin, in others rising abruptly fifteen or twenty feet above the tide, and composed of marl, which, being hardened by exposure to the air, has all the effect of wild and jagged rock. In the curve of the southern

side of this lake-like expanse the fountain alluded to pours its crystal tide over a broad and pebbly strand. C. A.]

It was a clear and lovely morning in autumn, the woods and fields that framed in the mirror of the stream were brilliant in the rich and variegated hues of the season, and the just-risen sun was pouring in generous profusion his roseate light over land and water, when Mr. Brougham and his friend guided their horses down the steep road that leads to the shore. Whatever thoughts and emotions at odds with their present pursuit were stirred within their minds by the tranquil beauty of the scene and the hour were speedily put to flight by the sight which was presented to them on emerging upon the sands.

At the distance of about a hundred yards down the stream a large iron pot supported by a rude tripod of prong-pointed sticks was suspended over a brush fire formed of the dry branches which had fallen from the old gnarled trees that, growing upon the very verge of the abrupt bank, stretched out their huge limbs far over the shore. Around this fire stood six or eight gentlemen of the neighborhood and a negro man, who every now and then threw an additional stick into the flame, and used other efforts to keep up a lively blaze.

"What the deuce does this mean?" exclaimed Brougham, as soon as he had recovered from his surprise sufficiently to speak.

"Most extraordinary, indeed!" said his friend; "but we shall soon know all about it."

Having made fast their horses to the drooping branches of a tree that grew from the bank, they turned toward their adversaries, who advanced to meet them.

A slight but courteous salutation was exchanged between the parties.

"Dr. Somers, will you explain to me, if you can, the meaning of what I see there?" asked Mr. Cheston, pointing to the group around the fire.

"With pleasure," said Dr. Somers, an elderly gentleman, who rejoiced in a good joke. "That negro boy is making preparations for the contemplated conflict, and those gentle-

men have been invited to settle any disputed points of dueling etiquette that may arise."

"Gentlemen to settle points of etiquette!" exclaimed Cheston—"negro boy making preparations for the conflict! You astonish me, Dr. Somers. I do not understand you, and you will allow me to say, sir, that such proceedings are very unusual and singular—indeed, I may say, absolutely amazing."

Mr. Brougham stood a little in the background of his friend, muttering to himself and looking as black as night. Colonel Fitzhugh was calm and dignified.

"If you and your friend will step this way, Mr. Cheston," said Dr. Somers, I will soon convince you that no proceedings have been entered upon and no preparations made that are unnecessary to the *dénouement* of this affair."

Thus saying he led the way toward the fire, accompanied by the colonel and followed at a little distance by Messrs. Brougham and Cheston, whose looks expressed an odd mixture of mystification, curiosity, and indignation, and who advanced rather slowly and hesitatingly, as though they hardly knew whether it were not better to call a halt and protest at once against all they saw, without waiting for farther explanation.

"Now, gentlemen," said Dr. Somers, after they had arrived at the fire, on which the pot was boiling at a tremendous rate, "before I explain the conclusion at which we have arrived, I should perhaps mention to you that my friend's reason for desiring time to consider upon the choice of arms was that he wished to call to mind some weapon which would place the mode of fighting upon a par with the cause of quarrel. All of these gentlemen coincide with us in the opinion that the choice which we have made is the offspring of a happy idea. This pot is filled with beans, which are now, I should say, to speak moderately, rather hot. Here are the weapons."

The doctor now drew forth from the huge pocket of his overcoat a paper-enveloped parcel, and unrolling it exposed to view a pair of those articles, made of elder with the pith extracted, which boys use to shoot paper pellets, and which by a

slight alteration they render capable of throwing water to some distance.

"Of these Mr. Brougham has the privilege to take his choice. The antagonists will then place themselves one on each side of the pot, and by means of these instruments shoot the hot bean soup and beans at each other until one of them shall express himself satisfied. The party making the acknowledgment will be considered as defeated, and thus will the affair terminate."

Mr. Brougham had come to the ground with the intention, of course, of leaving all the talking to his friend ; but he now found himself unable to withhold any longer the expression of his wrath.

"It is hardly worth while to appeal to you, *gentlemen*," he said, with a vehemently sarcastic emphasis, "since we have already been told that you have come here with the purpose of supporting Colonel Fitzhugh in this ridiculous proceeding. But I declare all that I have witnessed here this morning to be most outrageous. I have invited Colonel Fitzhugh to meet me in combat with deadly weapons, and he has met me with a miserable attempt at a joke."

"You will find it," answered the colonel, who was quite cool and collected, "to be very different from a joke if you will give it five minutes' trial. But I deny that I have gone beyond the privilege which I am entitled to under the laws of dueling. Captain Johns," he continued, turning to one of the gentlemen present, "you have been in the army and are well acquainted with these matters." (The colonel himself owed his military title to his being an aid-de-camp to the Governor of the State.) "Is not the challenged party entitled to the choice of weapons?"

"Most assuredly," was the answer.

"But you are aware, Captain Johns," said Mr. Cheston, "that the choice is limited to arms customarily in use among gentlemen on such occasions, as the pistol, the sword, or, less frequently, some species of gun, as the rifle, the musket."

"By your own showing, then," retorted the captain, "the limitation you speak of is not exceeded in this case ; the weap-

on selected by Colonel Fitzhugh being a species of gun, of the description commonly called popgun. The very letter of your demand is thus complied with."

"I see, *gentlemen*," here interrupted Mr. Brougham again, with, as before, a strongly sarcastic emphasis on the word "*gentlemen*," "that you persist in your intention of upholding Colonel Fitzhugh in his purpose of avoiding, by a wretched jest, to give me the satisfaction I have demanded. As I see no prospect now of obtaining the object of that demand," he added, with a sardonic grin directed to the colonel, "I have the honor of bidding you good-morning."

"Say rather, young gentleman," retorted Captain Johns with sternness, "that our purpose was to save you from the commission of a thoughtless and wicked act. The weapon chosen by Colonel Fitzhugh is no less legitimate than your own cause of quarrel. The remarks made by the colonel in his public speech furnish, according to the strictest interpretation of the laws of dueling, no just occasion for sending a challenge. Though, when young, I was as rash and impetuous as yourself, and considered dueling the most honorable mode of settling all disputes, I have since seen much cause to change my views; and I could relate to you incidents which have come under my own observation that prove it to be one of the most horrible crimes. Hereafter, when your head is as gray as mine, should you live to that time, you will thank us for rescuing you, at the very outset, from the reckless career into which you were about to plunge."

"I am exceedingly obliged to you, Captain Johns," said Mr. Brougham, "for your kind and very instructive discourse, but as I came for a purpose very different from listening to a sermon I can not enjoy it for want of preparation. So I bid you again, *gentlemen*, a very good morning."

"You decline, then," said Colonel Fitzhugh, calling to Mr. Brougham, as the latter and his friend were walking toward their horses, "you decline to fight me on my own terms?"

"Go to the ——." The rest of the sentence was not distinctly heard.

How many years Mr. Brougham suffered from the ridicule

attached to his essay in dueling I can not say; but he must have had a hard time of it, as he lived to a good old age, and the joke is still told in the neighborhood. He never sent another challenge; and the effect which "The Duel at the Spout" had in checking the habit of dueling in the country was scarcely surpassed by the influence which the publication of the adventures of the Knight of La Mancha produced in quelling knight-errantry in Spain.

Cousin Walter finished his story as we entered the lane leading to Old Delight.

CHAPTER VII.

THE OLD PLANTATION.

The Dwelling-house and its Surroundings.—The View.—Plantation Reminiscences.—Childish Day-dreams.

I THINK it better now—before I introduce the reader to Uncle Weatherby and his family—to give a description of the Old Plantation and its surroundings. Such a description will be necessary to a better understanding of some of the scenes which I design to relate.

Well does Old Delight deserve the name of "the Old Plantation;" for it has belonged to and been the residence of the Weatherby family upward of two hundred years; and ever since the introduction of tobacco into Maryland that plant has been one of its staple productions.

The dwelling-house was a large one-story frame structure, with a piazza on the southwestern side running the whole length of the building. Yet, though in the simplest style of rustic architecture, the dwelling was not wanting in beauty. Vines twined around the posts of the piazza and flowers breathed their fragrance into every window. The rose, the eglantine, the sweet-brier, the daffodil, and the sweet-william, at their proper seasons, ornamented the large yard; and stately rows of the Lombardy poplar, intermingled with locust-

trees for the purposes of shade, gave to it an air befitting the residence of a wealthy planter.

Beyond the yard, on the slope of the hill facing the river, was the large old garden, laid out in squares and divided by successive "falls" into several plateaus. The upper plateau, the only one visible from the house, was for the most part occupied by flower-beds; and a broad walk leading down through the whole length of the centre of the garden was bordered on each side by neatly-trimmed boxwood-trees, whose perfume frequently filled even the winter air.

On the edge of a small ravine, at some distance from the foot of the garden, stood a log-cabin, the "quarter" of Uncle Jim, the leader of the plantation hands, and who had been raised as the body-servant of Mr. Weatherby.

A poet could not desire a more beautiful lowland landscape than that which presented itself to the eye from Old Delight. From the northwest around to the southeast, at the distance of a few hundred yards, waved the dark pine forest. In the edges of this, toward the north, were visible here and there several negro-huts, built of logs and called "quarters." To the southwest the hill on which the dwelling stood subsided rather abruptly to a broad level plain some miles in extent, which is edged on the southeast side by the forest, still of pine, on the northwest by the banks of the Clearwater, and which terminates toward the west at the distance of two and a half miles in Point Quiet.

This point, low, flat, and sandy, and covered for the most part with stunted cedar-trees, runs far out into the river, dividing that part of it which could be seen from Old Delight into two broad lagoons. The one of these toward the southeast was partly hidden by the forest trees, whose lofty tops furnished a dark fringe to its bright but distant waters; the northern and nearer spread out in unobstructed view its three-mile-wide expanse of flashing waves. On the left hand, when fronting the river, lay St. Joseph's Creek, with its tributaries, Mill Creek and Back Creek, whose waters flow through a navigable channel into the southeastern lagoon. These streams were concealed from view by the pine forest, except a

few bright spots that shone like silver through the dark foliage. On the right hand gleamed at frequent intervals through the trees the waters of St. Peter's (as it is named on the maps, but, as it is called in the neighborhood, Weatherby's) Creek—a beautiful and lake-like piece of water which rises a short distance to the northward of Old Delight, and, passing within a long quarter of a mile of the dwelling on its northwestern side, is connected with the Clearwater by several narrow and shallow channels, navigable by only such light craft as the skiff and the canoe.

On the opposite side of the river lay the fair fields and woods of the oldest settled county of the state. Often in childhood have I watched the sunset over river, field, and forest, always wondering at the inexpressible magnificence of earth and sky, and especially at the rosy-golden track that led across the stream toward the sunset. It was pleasant to me to indulge the fancy that that brilliant track was the path trod by the angels in passing to and fro between heaven and earth.

Of all the bays in the wide world, there is none which, for beauty and majesty combined, surpasses the Chesapeake; and of all the bright rivers which flow into that noble bay there is not one which excels the Clearwater in the purity of its waters and the variety and loveliness of its picturesque scenery. In some places its banks are high and rugged; in others, covered with greensward, they slope gently to the shore. Here they spread out into wide fields, dotted at intervals with rustic buildings; there the dense forest nods over the wave. As you glide over its bosom you see at frequent intervals a fair wide tributary mingling with its tide, giving you, through a bright vista, fair views into the adjoining country. So transparent are its waters that far out from the shore you may see, in the openings of the sea-weed forest on its bottom, the flashing sides of the finny tribes as they glide over the pearly sands.

As I look into my memory in order to lay before the reader this description of the Old Plantation and its surroundings, how many a scene of the days long gone pass before me; the

one mingling with and melting into the other like the dissolving views of the phantasmagoria. Again I see the happy family, the father, the mother, the blooming daughter, the two healthy sons, and the large "flock" of cheerful and contented slaves—all the descendants of those to whom for many generations that old plantation had given sustenance and a home. And, in imagination, my feet tread where they have often pressed in earlier days.

In spring, far down on the levels, where the "hands" are planting corn or tobacco, or hoeing around the "hills" that contain the young plants; or, in summer, where they are guiding the plow through the tall rows of corn, or mowing the broad wheat-field, or cutting down the ripe tobacco in wide swaths, across the plain; or, in the "fall," when they are cutting the high tops or pulling the green blades of the corn, or gathering the heavy ears, or seeding the wheat for the next year's crop. Then, in the bright winter days, away in the deep forest, where the wood-cutters are slaying the tall trees, while the air rings with the sound of the axe, and rank after rank of cord-wood arises; or, in the later winter or early spring, where, in a small clearing in the woods, the negroes, ever merry and ever working with a song, are burning the tobacco-beds, or sowing and trampling in with their feet the delicate seed. Or, in the pleasant days of late spring, or of summer, or of early fall, accompanied by Cousin Walter, I am guiding a light canoe over the tranquil waters of Weatherby's Creek; then, in "The Channels," between the creek and the river, chasing the fat channel crab; then, far out on the river flats, where our little bark rides the waves as buoyant as a cork and the health-giving breeze fans us with its cooling wings, with our light cedar angles we draw from their watery homes, in rapid succession, the striped perch, the sparkling crocus, the speckled trout, or the strong and bounding rock.

Then home again to the old dwelling-house; and, entering the broad piazza, I look into the front windows, and recall the childish wonder and delight with which I saw the yard with its poplars and locust-trees, and the wide fields, and the river, and the blue sky pictured in the panes.

From the piazza, through the wide hall, I pass into the large old parlor, which I was seldom allowed to enter when a child, for the old housekeeper held this room sacred to company and state occasions. On the floor is spread the old-fashioned carpeting in whose pattern I was always finding some new device. Around the room are ranged the high-backed oaken chairs, on whose pictured backs I loved to pore. Against the wall, between the two front windows, hangs the large mirror, with its quaintly carved framing, which was to me an ever new subject of study. There, too, is the large fire-place with its ever-bright shovel, tongs, andirons, and fender, and, in summer time, its boughs of holly or cedar; and the high mantle-piece, with its fanciful carvings, covering a whole side of the room. I have often noted, with terror and curiosity, the wolf's heads, the griffins, and other ferocious devices that covered the antique paneling. There, too, are the dark mahogany tables, with their curved legs and clawed feet; and the gothic book-case with the diamond-shaped panes of its glass door. I remember my childish wondering, ere I learned to read, when I saw others poring over the volumes, and my still greater wondering when they spoke aloud what the books said to them; and I remember, too, my intense delight (after the mystery of letters had been unveiled to me, and I was allowed access to that little book-case) when I came across some volume of wild adventures or supernatural occurrences. Those pleasant days! The sunshine then was to me sunshine indeed; and the voice of the breeze ever whispered to me pleasant fancies.

Then into the long dining-room, with its high, broad side-board and other old-fashioned furniture; then, through an entry, into the large sitting-room, bright with memorials of pleasant scenes and domestic affections; then into the wide room devoted to the spindle and the shuttle—for, in the old days, each plantation not only raised its own cotton and wool, but also made them into garments for the supply of its own household; and substantial and comfortable garments they were, too. And now I enter the capacious kitchen, where at one time Aunt Abby, and, subsequently, Aunt Rachel, ruled

paramount. I remember them both well. Aunt Abby was a tidy and motherly old colored woman, whose heart overflowed with kindness. She was very affectionate and gentle in her ways toward children. Seldom did I enter her domain that she had not something nice and palate-tempting to offer to her favorite, "Marse Clarry," as she called me. As for Aunt Rachel, she was a termagant, and had in her disposition too much of the element in which she dealt. Let me say what I can in her praise, however—she was an excellent cook ; and her naturally ardent temperament was no doubt heightened by a nervous anxiety to become famous in her vocation.

Apropos of cooking, the breakfast-table is waiting for us at Old Delight.

CHAPTER VIII.

OLD DELIGHT,

The Family Group.—The Welcome.—Old and new Acquaintances.—A Snarly Row.—My new Quarters.—Uncle Jim.—Ike and the Jockermer Larnter.

WHEN Cousin Walter and I arrived at Uncle Weatherby's, we found all the family gathered on the piazza to meet us. There was Uncle Weatherby himself, a tall fine-looking old gentleman between fifty and sixty years of age, with a frank, open face somewhat dark in complexion, and jet-black hair thickly sprinkled with white ; his wife ("Aunt Mary," as I have always called her), a lady of a form rather *embonpoint*, and of stately presence, but whose fair face, shaded by dark brown locks, wore always a gentle and kindly expression ; my "cousin Jack," the younger brother, ten years old, whose hair and eyes—deep blue—were like his mother's, and whose bright and joyous look indicated even now something of that love of merry mischief which was his besetting sin ; and last, but very far from least, my lovely cousin Lucy, a girl of fourteen or fifteen years, with her slender and graceful form—

small even for her age—her rather pale cheeks, her softly flashing black eyes, and her wild redundancy of raven curls. All gave me a hearty greeting and a cordial welcome ; and many kindly inquiries were asked and answered.

“ Breakfast is already on the table,” said Uncle Weatherby ; “ but here are some old acquaintances of yours, Clarence, who seem so anxious to speak to you that our morning meal must wait awhile.”

A number of the servants, who on our arrival had poured out of the kitchen, which stood in a corner of the yard, were gathered around the steps of the piazza, among whom I saw Por-ringer, and Crowley, and 'Possum, showing that the cart had arrived with my baggage before us. The faces of all were smiling and joyous ; and a number of them were speaking to me at the same time as I ran down the steps to speak to them and to shake hands with the elders. I remembered only two among them, Uncle Jim, the leader, and Jinny, the daughter of my favorite, Aunt Abby, who had been a waiter in the house when I was last at Old Delight, but who was now advanced to the dignity and influence of cook. Aunt Abby, I learned, had died nearly a year before. I received many compliments on my personal appearance, many felicitations on my good health, and many a “so glad ter see yer, marster,” ere I had finished shaking hands and turned to reascend the steps of the piazza.

The yard presented a very lively scene at this moment. One or two fox-hounds, which were lying about the doors on our arrival, had by their noisy salutations drawn together all the dogs within hearing ; and now some twelve or fifteen hounds—for Mr. Weatherby kept a pack—and two or three common curs, such as are used in hunting raccoons and opossums, were mingled in among the negroes ; and some of the mischief-loving youngsters, among whom I observed Crowley conspicuous, soon began to set them together by the ears. In an instant the hubbub became uproarious. The growling and snapping of the larger dogs while making assaults, the yelps of those that were bitten, the barking of the smaller sort, which kept at respectful distance, and the dismal howling of some of

the hounds, mingled with the screams of the negro women as they ran away from the combatants, and the shouts of the negro boys who had quickly formed a ring, though conveniently aloof from the fight, made altogether "an effect" more easily imagined than described. Several of the men, however, ran and brought buckets of water, which, dashed in recklessly among the canine crowd, soon put a stop to the battle; and the so recently bold and wrathful combatants, completely cowed, were seen skulking away in all directions, with their tails between their legs.

"Marster," said Uncle Jim to Mr. Weatherby, advancing, hat in hand, to the piazza steps as soon as the fighting and noise were quelled, "Ike wus sont yisserday arternoon ter hunt arter some er de cattle dat broke out er de meddow parster yisserday, un he ain't come home yit."

"Has any one seen him since, do you know?"

"No, marster."

"Out somewhere on a frolic, I suspect. Send the young rascal in to me when he returns."

"Yes, marster," said the old negro as he turned away.

"Jim is so severe," said Uncle Weatherby, addressing me, "in his punishment of fractious or disobedient hands, when left to himself, that I have been obliged to order him not to administer any flogging without my direction. Thus I have to examine every case of delinquency myself. But, come; Mary is, I know, getting impatient to see us around her breakfast table."

Aunt Mary, on the contrary, had a very pleasant smile upon her countenance. She appeared, indeed, with that sweet and benign-looking face of hers, as if she had never been impatient in all her life.

The breakfast-table was piled with substantials. Coffee of excellent flavor, toast, hot rolls, cold ham, fried perch and rock, spring chicken, also fried, and the sweetest and freshest butter comprised the bill of fare. After this meal had been discussed Cousin Walter showed me up stairs to his room, which we were to occupy together during my visit. Here we spent some time in looking over my baggage to see that all

was right, and in getting out some presents which I had brought to the family. After this we fell into conversation about "old times," as we called our school-boy days, and about the pleasant times we expected to have during my stay in Chittering Neck. The room had two windows, one of which faced the river and the other the forest; both of them were open, thus affording free access to the cooling air and a full view of the bright out-of-doors. We were as merry and full of chat as the cheerful aspect of nature and the agreeable themes of our discourse could make us, when we heard a loud burst of hearty laughter in the piazza, and almost immediately afterward Crowley came into the room to tell us that his master wanted to see us.

We found Uncle Weatherby sitting on one of the benches of the piazza, while Uncle Jim, the plantation leader, was leaning, with his grizzly locks uncovered, against the nearest pillar of the piazza, and a negro boy, some sixteen or seventeen years old, and very short and fat, was standing before uncle, hat in hand, at a distance of six or eight feet. Both the negroes made us a low bow as we entered, the boy scraping his right foot and pulling the woolly hair in the front of his head at the same moment. This lad was dressed in coarse linen shirt and trowsers, and had, at the moment of our appearance, a rather puzzled expression of face.

"Come, Ike," said Uncle Weatherby to the negro boy, "begin your story again. These young gentlemen will be glad to hear it. Clarence, I think, knows nothing of Jacks-with-the-lantern, unless from books. At least, I am sure, Clarence, that you have never heard of their performing such feats as those achieved by an *ignis fatuus* seen by Ike last night."

"I didden see no niggers fatter, marster," said Ike, with a comical side glance at his own fat form; "I on'y seed er Jockermer Larnter."

"It isn't likely that you would see any thing fatter than yourself," said uncle, with a laugh. "But go on with your story."

"'Deed un double, marster, 'taint no story" (falsehood); "tis de solum trufe."

"Well, let us hear it, whatever it is."

"Why, you see, marster," said Ike, scratching his head—a certain proof of his being ill at ease, being doubtful, perhaps, of the strength of his position—"you see, sah, Uncle Jim sent me ubbout un hour by sun yisserday ebenin' to hunt arter de cattle. Well, marster, I wen' down tud de medder ter see where dey bruck through; un dere, sure unnuh, I fin' er parnel er de fence down. Den I sees de tracks, un I follers um inter de woods. Arter I got inter de woods some dissunse I lose de tracks. I searched all through de woods from de head er Back Creek down ter Sin' Josuph's Creek, den up Sin' Josuph's Creek tud de head uv it. By dat time 'twus dark, un I 'gun ter think I better be makin' tracks fur home uggin. But I didden know much er dat part er de woods, un 'twus so dark down dere ummong de big trees dat I soon los' my way. I knowed dat dere wus er free nigger's quarter, ole Uncle Minger's, somewurs ubabout down dere, un I searched urround us I wus er gwine ullong fur ter see ef I could see any thing uv any light shinin' out er de door or de window uv de house. Well, den, marster, den I seed er light right erfure me in de woods, un it didden seem ter be fur off, un I follered it, un I follered it, un I follered it, but I coudden git to it. But I kep' on follerin' it tell I wus so tired I wus almose dead; un den, all at wuns, I fell right down inter er gully ummong de briars. Un den de light, dat wus er Jockermer Larnter's, wus right ober me on de side er de gully; un den de Jockermer Larnter laughed at me, un throwed stones at me, un said, 'I catch one nigger anyhow; how do yer like yer bed, darky? I se worry sorry you can't sleep soun'."

"What time of night was it, Ike," asked uncle, "when you fell into the gully?"

"Ubbout midnight, marster."

"How did you know that it was about midnight?"

"I knowed it by de Seben Pinters, sah."

"Well, go on with your story."

"Deed un deed un double deed, marster, ebery word of it's true."

"But let us hear the whole of it."

"Dat's all, sah."

"Why, you are not in the gully now, are you?"

"No, sah."

"Well, you must have got out of it some way, then?"

"Why, you see, marster, when de daylight come de Jockermer Larnter he go away den."

"Why didn't you get out of the gully before?"

"Why, you see, marster, de Jockermer Larnter he kep' laughin' at me, un throwin' stones at me, and sayin' agger-watin' things all night; un den ebery time I try ter git out he push me back inter de briers uggin."

"That's a new feature, Ike; I thought you said just now that you had told all."

"I furgot dat, sah."

"What? that you said you had told all?"

"No, sah; I furgot ubabout de Jockermer Larnter pushin' me back uggin when I tried ter git out ur de gully. When de daylight come un he go away, den, arter I wait awhile, un was sartin sure dat he was done gone sure unnuf, I clim' out ur de gully un come home."

"Why were you so long getting home? It is now after ten o'clock."

"Why, you know, marster, I wus los' in de woods, un had ter fin' my way back."

"Sure enough. So the Jack-o'-lantern continued unfeelingly to amuse himself at your expense while you were getting so dreadfully scratched by the briers?"

"Yas, marster."

"Where are the scratches?"

This question was what Cousin Walter said he would "emphatically call a crusher." Ike was completely nonplussed by it. His under jaw dropped, leaving his mouth wide open, the pupils of his eyes dilated, and his face assumed an expression of the most abject helplessness.

Uncle Jim, who seemed to have enjoyed the whole affair from the beginning, laughed heartily.

"You can't come ober ole marster, *I tell you*," he said. "Who eber hearn tell uv er Jockermer Larnter when de moon was er shinin' almosc as bright as day all night long?"

"Did you ever hear of a Jack-o'-lantern, Uncle Jim, that laughed, and talked, and hit hard blows?" asked Cousin Walter.

"Neber in all my born days, Marse Wat."

"Now, Ike," said uncle, "I hope that this will be a warning to you never to attempt to deceive me any more by telling falsehoods. It is much better to speak the truth at once. You see how easily you have been found out. I suppose the exposure will bring a punishment of its own, for the hands will have this as a standing joke against you. I will let you off from any other punishment, in consideration of the amusement which you have afforded us by your wonderful adventures with the Jack-o'-lantern, and on condition that you tell me truly where you were last night."

Ike's face brightened up at this speech; a heavy load was taken from his spirits.

"Thank you, marster," he said; "I will tell you de blessed trufe. I wen' ter Marse Tom Sullivan's to see de gals, sah, un den we got up er dance, un den de boys dere had plenty er whisky, un I drunk too much er de liquor, un den I was usfeard ter come hóme tell I was sober; un dat is ebery word de blessed trufe, marster."

"I believe you now," said uncle. "Go to the kitchen and ask Jinny to give you some breakfast, and then be off to your work."

"Thank you, marster."

So Ike got clear to go among the plantation hands, and to tell to them again, as I learned afterward, his wonderful adventures with the Jack-o'-lantern, with various additions and adornments: how, for instance, he and the Jack-o'-lantern had a fight; how he beat his mysterious combatant, and then found his way to Major Sullivan's "quarters" (for this fact of his visit there they could easily have ascertained), and spent the rest of the night with the young "colored people" there. And the negroes for the most part believed him, for they have great faith in stories of the supernatural, although Major Sullivan's negroes said that he had not told his marvelous adventures there, and moreover, had arrived, they thought—but they were

divided in opinion on this point—at an early hour of the night.

Uncle Jim was not at all pleased with the turn the affair had taken.

"I tell you what, Marse John," he said to uncle, "de very nex' time dat boy is sont any wheres he'll stay jes' us long uggin, ef not longer; un den he'll see all sorts er sperrits, un'll tell us how de witches wus er ridin' him, un de Lord knows what. How is I ter make him do his work, I wunner, when he gits off dis way?"

"Never mind, Jim," answered uncle, laughing; "if he does so again, you shall have the pleasure of giving him a sound flogging. In the mean time make him keep close to his work."

CHAPTER IX.

IKE AND HIS GRANNY.

Aunt Abby.—Ike.—The Ghost.—Hot Weather and Iced Juleps.—Early to bed, early to rise.

"THAT Ike is a bad boy," said Cousin Walter, when we had returned up stairs. "Of course you remember his grandmother, good old Aunt Abby; you were always her pet when you went to school here. Hardly a day passed, by-the-by, after you went away, that she did not talk about you, always grieving that she would probably die without seeing you again."

"If I had known that," I said, "I should have left no means untried to visit her. Dear old Aunt Abby! Do you know, cousin, that I often think that Aunt Abby has done me as much good as any body else in all the wide world? She was so kind to me, so gentle with me. In those wild bursts of passion to which I was so liable when a child, she was so patient with me; and then when my anger was over, she would talk to me, in her untutored way, so gently, so affectionately, mingling in her rebuke more of pity than of blame, that after hearing one of her kind lectures, I always felt ashamed of my

temper, and always made a resolution to be good. I wish that I could have kept better those frequently renewed resolves."

"By-the-by," remarked Cousin Walter, after a pause, "Sister Lucy has an old-fashioned gold ring which Aunt Abby commissioned her to give you as a keepsake. The old lady had kept it ever since her younger days."

"I am glad of it, Cousin Walter," I observed. "I shall prize the gift more dearly than I would the costliest jewel from the noblest lady in the land."

"She distinguished you above all of us, Clarence; but I was not jealous; it was but natural, you were so attached to her, and your attachments are so enthusiastic."

"You seemed to have something to say of Ike, cousin, when you began to speak of Aunt Abby," I suggested.

"Sure enough," he answered. "Ike never seemed to like his grandmother; perhaps because he felt his own wickedness more when he came into contact with her goodness. He was disobedient and rude to her to the last, both in action and language, and never seemed better pleased than when he succeeded in making her speak harshly to him in return; and he is, I believe, the only one to whom I ever heard her speak harshly. What I have said about Ike and his grandmother is necessary, that you may understand a joke that was played off upon the former a short time since. I think you will not deny that Ike was served rightly.

"Both my wild brother, Jack, and Crowley are fond of practical jokes; indeed they often go too far in playing them off. Crowley is one of the best mimics I know, and is very fond of 'taking people off.' This lad always expressed much indignation at his brother Ike's rudeness to their grandmother, and seemed to take the matter much to heart.

"Jack and Crowley were coming one evening, a week or two ago, a little after twilight, from the Channels, where they had been to catch crabs, when they saw Ike, who was returning from carrying a message for father to one of our neighbors, coming along the path toward them.

"An idea occurred to Jack which he immediately communicated to Crowley, who was much delighted with it; and by

the time that Ike overtook them they had settled their plan of action.

“‘Marse Jack,’ said Crowley, after the three had walked a little way together, ‘I lef’ my crab-stick at de las’ fence we got ober. Will you please ter wait here ullittle while tell I go back un git it? I leabe de basket er crabs wid you tell I come back. ‘Twon’t take me long.’

“‘Let Ike take the basket,’ answered Jack, ‘and we will walk on slowly till you overtake us.’

“‘I shell soon be back,’ said Crowley, as he handed the basket to Ike. ‘I shouldden like ter lose dat crab-stick; it ‘ll be ullong time ‘fore I gits unnudder us good us dat.’

“So Crowley went back on the path, and Jack and Ike trudged on slowly together. The night was clear and calm. There was no moon, but the stars shone brightly, and there was scarcely a cloud in the sky.

“The black people’s grave-yard, I suppose you recollect, stands in a little grove of forest trees at the far end of the orchard, somewhat more than a quarter of a mile from the house.

“‘Ike,’ said Jack, as they approached this spot, through which their path lay, ‘have any ghosts ever been seen in the black people’s grave-yard?’

“‘Not as I knows on, Marse Jack; I neber hearn tell uv any.’

“‘Don’t you see something white now—just there in among the trees, near old Uncle Baruch’s grave?’

“‘No, Marse,’ replied Ike, drawing a deep breath after a sudden start and a short pause, ‘I don’t see nuffin.’

“‘Oh, I see,’ said Jack, ‘tis only a dead tree with the bark peeled off. Are you afraid of going through grave-yards at night, Ike?’

“‘I don’t like it much, sah, speshully ef I’s by myse’f.’

“‘Suppose we were to see one now?’ asked Jack, as they entered the grave-yard, ‘wouldn’t it be dreadful?’

“‘Lors er massy, Marse Jack,’ said Ike, in a tremulous voice, ‘what de matter wid you, dat you talk so ubabout ghosts, when we’s jes ur gwine through er grave-yard, un granny jes dead un berrid here no longer uggo dan las’ winter?’

"There's Aunt Abby's grave, now," said Jack; and then exclaimed, suddenly, "See, Ike, what's that standing in among the weeds near it?"

The object he alluded to presented, under the pale starlight and the shadows of the trees, very much the appearance worn by Aunt Abby in her very old age, and just before she was taken with her last illness. It had on apparently a dark-colored shawl and a white cap, and seemed to be supported by two crutches; the lower part of the figure was concealed by the tall weeds.

"Aha, you young rascal!" said this startling object, in a voice that seemed identical with Aunt Abby's, as it hobbled at a rapid rate toward Ike, "Aha, you young rascal! I ketch you now."

Ike gave a loud scream, dropped the basket, and took to his heels at an immense rate of travel. He never slackened his speed until he ran into the sitting-room among us all—father, mother, Lucy, and myself—with his fingers stretched out, his eyes staring, his mouth wide open, and his face wearing that indescribable appearance which in the negro corresponds to paleness in a white person.

"Granny! granny! de sperrit! de sperrit!" he gasped out at length, after several failures to articulate.

"What is the matter?" asked father, springing from his seat.

"De ghos', marster, de ghos'" was all Ike could say.

"The boy is scared out of his senses," said mother, compassionately; "let him wait until he recovers himself a little. Don't be afraid, Ike," she added gently; "we are all here. There is no ghost nor any thing else to hurt you here."

Ike at length recovered sufficiently to tell us that he had seen his grandmother's ghost, and when, and where.

In the mean time, the ghost, after chasing him a few yards, had returned to where Jack was standing by the basket of crabs.

"How I done done it, Marse Jack?" asked the ghost.

"First rate," answered Jack. "I was a little scared myself at first, the voice was so much like Aunt Abby's. How did you make yourself look so much like her?"

"Dem's all," answered Crowley, as he took a white cotton

pocket-handkerchief from his head, and put on his blue cotton jacket, which had been tied round his neck like a shawl. ‘Dem’s all, dem and two pieces of fence-rail for crutches.’

“‘I’m almost sorry you did it,’ observed Jack; ‘it was almost enough to scare Ike out of his senses. I shall feel uneasy till I know he is safe.’

“‘I ain’ sorry er single bit,’ said Crowley, ‘I’m glad uv it. He desarves wus ‘un dat. It’ll do ‘im good.’

“They got a very severe lecture from father when they got home—for he charged Crowley at once with personating the ghost, and Jack with ‘putting him up to it’—and might have been whipped, if mother had not begged them off. Nevertheless, father himself enjoyed the joke, and laughed heartily over it when the excitement arising from his first alarm lest Ike should lose his senses had passed.

“Ike—who, like all negroes I have ever known, is very superstitious, and is a firm believer in ghosts, and is moreover well aware, no doubt, of his deserving such a visitation—has hardly yet been convinced that it was not a genuine spirit which he saw.”

During the morning I wrote to my friends in the city. Cousin Walter and myself had intended to ride over to the village of St. Joseph’s in the afternoon; but the heat became so excessive as the day advanced that we determined to remain at Old Delight. We passed the remainder of the day with the rest of the family, sitting under the trees in the yard, where we could catch every breath of air. There Uncle Porringer served us, during the afternoon, with ice cream, and the male portion of the party with cool juleps, a kind of drink too much liked still, perhaps, in Chittering Neck. With these helps, and sometimes reading, sometimes chatting, we got through the rest of the day with tolerable comfort.

We separated for bed at an early hour that night, as it had been arranged that uncle, Cousin Walter, and myself should go next morning before breakfast to witness the fishing of a new weir, which had been in operation only a few days. Jack wished to accompany us very much; but uncle insisted on his going to school.

CHAPTER X.

FISHING THE WEIR.

Balmy Morning.—“Forward March!”—St. Peter’s Creek.—The Race.
“De Deference.”—“Try it again.”—The Oyster Punga.—The
Channels.—The Flats.—The Weir.

It was in the first light of a cloudless and most lovely morning that I sprang from bed and donned my dress, with a heart light and bounding with the full pulse of youth and health. The excitement of the preceding day, and its sultriness, had caused my sleep to be sound and refreshing, and I felt, in its full force, the invigorating coolness of the early dawn. The air was filled with the perfume of the flowers that grew under our windows; and now and then could be heard from the trees around the chirping of an early-wakeful bird. All the influences around us were such as to produce cheerfulness and contentment of spirit. The dwellers in cities can have but a faint conception of the delight of awaking in a fair and fragrant summer morning in the country.

Just as Cousin Walter and myself were finishing a hasty toilette we heard the voice of Uncle Weatherby calling to us loudly from the yard and telling us to be in a hurry. Of course we lost no time in making our appearance before him. All three of us were dressed in brown linen duck roundabouts and pantaloons, and our heads surmounted by new straw hats. We found Uncle Weatherby, attended by Porringer with a large basket on each arm, and Ike loaded with two oars, a paddle, and a couple of nets.

A short walk across the fields brought us to a negro quarter at the edge of the woods. Here we were joined by Crowley with several paddles on his shoulders. Having followed a narrow path through the woods for a quarter of a mile we emerged upon the shores of St. Peter’s Creek, in a small cove of which we found two canoes, a batteau, and a scow drawn upon the shore under a miniature cliff. One of the canoes—

the larger one—had row-locks for a couple of oars. In this uncle and Porringer and Ike embarked, while Cousin Walter and I, with Crowley, took possession of the other canoe, a small light one intended only for the paddle.

The sky was bright with that mild roseate radiance melting into golden which heralds the sun's appearance, and the tranquil waters of the creek were reflecting in softened hues the beautiful heavens above them, as we launched our little barks upon the crystal surface. All around the shores the still shadows of the trees were reposing in the cool wave.

Two broad and nearly equal expanses of water—being each about half a mile in length, the one stretching northward, the other westward, with a wild and wood-crowned little promontory, called Old Weir Point, running out on the left into the stream at their point of junction—lie between the landing which we were leaving and the mouth of the creek. Our small canoe was gliding along somewhat abaft of the other, and at a little distance from her wake to be out of the sweep of the oars, when it occurred to me that it would be quite a triumph if we could succeed in passing the point ahead of the larger boat; and so freely did our light bark bound before the strokes of our pliant blades that I thought it more than probable that we should be able to do so, especially as Uncle Weatherby was only using his paddle as a rudder. I made the suggestion to Cousin Walter, who was pleased with it, and directed Crowley, who was quite delighted with the idea of a race, to use a little more strength, but to do so quietly, that our design might not be known to the parties in the other boat until we were fairly abreast of them. But Uncle Porringer, probably anticipating something of the sort, was on the alert.

"Aha, Marse Watty," he exclaimed, as soon as the speed of our canoe was increased, "I sees what you're arter. What you say, Marse John? shall we gib um er trial tud de pint?"

"I have no objection," said uncle; "but wait awhile until we are in a line for a fair start. Take care, Clarence; hold your paddle firmly and evenly, and mind that you do not miss the stroke, or you may fall overboard."

For we were all standing up in our boats.

"Oh, I have not forgotten my boat-craft, uncle," I answered; "and I used to be, I flatter myself, rather expert at the paddle when I was a boy."

The boats were now in a line.

"Gib way dere, Ike," said the old negro, "un let us show de young marsters de difference."

"Bend to your paddle, Crowley," said Cousin Walter, "try your best, Clarence; and maybe they'll show us the difference in a way that Uncle Porringer doesn't mean."

Each arm was now exerted to its utmost strength to achieve the victory, and the boats moved very swiftly. The large canoe drove a broad ripple before her bow; but ours, being of lighter fabric and carrying less weight, glided over the waters rather than cut her way through them. We soon began to gain upon them; and when at length we turned Old Weir Point they were some ten or fifteen yards behind us. As we ceased our exertions at the paddles we raised a loud shout of triumph.

"Well, Uncle Porringer," said Cousin Walter, when they had come up with us, "what is the difference?—some dozen yards in our favor, is it not?"

"Neber min' dis one time, Marse Watty," answered the old man, who seemed quite vexed at his defeat, "you needen be so proud 'bout dat; nur Marse Clarry needen look so bright in de face; un dat young nigger dere needen grin so nudder—de young varmunt! Bress de Lord! ef Marse John on'y he'p us ullittle wid de paddle we beat you yit frum here tud de Charnels."

By "the Channels" he meant the mouth of the creek.

Uncle laughed heartily at the old negro's petulence, but promised his aid.

"What you say, Marse Watty?" asked the old fellow, "shall we try it uggin?"

"Yes," said cousin; "and, if you beat us this time, I will make you a present of a dozen clay pipes for your tobacco."

"I takes you up at your word, sah," said Porringer.

And off we were again, leaving a long, clear track behind us.

The rounding of Old Weir Point had brought us into view of the river; and our light barks were rapidly skimming the surface of the lower reach side by side, neither having yet gained much advantage.

"Porringer," asked uncle, "what is it I see there through the trees across Sullivan's Point?"

Sullivan's Point is on the northern side of the creek, at its mouth.

"Mast uv er boat, sah, I think," was the answer; "un er low mast like dat can't 'long ter nothin' but one er dem tarel thievin' Eastern Shore pungas. Some er dem roguin' rascals is allers ubbout. Arter creek isheters" (oysters) "now, I reck'n."

"If that is the case," said uncle, "we must call at Mayhew's, as we return up the creek, and put him on his guard!"

Mayhew was the name of a man whom uncle and Major Sullivan, whose plantations adjoined, had employed to protect the waters of the creek from depredators. His log hut was on the northern side of the stream opposite Old Weir Point.

We had begun by this time to gain on the large canoe; and, gradually increasing our distance, we passed over the muscle and manino shoals near the mouth of the creek, and entered the southern of two shallow and narrow channels which, winding among several very small flat islets covered with tall grass, connect the stream which we had been traversing with the Clearwater River. The channel which we had selected passes through the midst of this group of little islands, and at the instant of opening into the river touches the extremity of a long, low, sandy peninsula which runs out from the southern bank of the creek, dividing it from the river. The spot where we entered the latter is the point of junction of the two shorter sides of a right-angled triangle, formed by the diverging shores; the side toward the northwest terminating half a mile off in Otter Point; and the other side extending a distance of a mile and a half to Point Quiet. The space contained within the triangle is called the Flats, on account of the bottom sloping downward very gradually, and is on that account, as a fisherman need not be told, famous in the rod and

line business, being a place where the fish "most do congregate." The weir extended out upon the flats about half way between the mouth of the creek and Otter Point.

The occupants of the larger canoe had taken the other channel, which runs along the northern bank, with the view of heading us; but, although they gained a little, they failed in achieving their purpose, and were scarcely out of the channel before we were at the weir.

It is more than probable that the reader who lives in the city, or far away from tide-water, has but a general idea, if any, of a weir. I will, therefore, "description the matter" to him; and it is a simple thing enough, though answering very well the purpose intended.

A kind of hurdle fence composed of sticks of split timber—pine, chestnut, or oak—set perpendicularly, and fastened together with white-oak withes, after the fashion of basket-work, is constructed from the shore outward, in a straight line, till it reaches a depth of water averaging, between high and low tides, some eight or ten feet. Here it passes through and divides into two parts a circular inclosure made of the same materials, and having a diameter of ten or twelve feet. The whole affair is kept in its place by stout poles driven firmly into the ground at convenient distances, and extends from the bottom to a height of one or two feet above the surface of the water at high tide. A small opening facing the shore is made in the lower part of the inclosure, on each side of its junction with the fence. The fish, while feeding along the shore, swim against the tide, otherwise the water would get into their gills and suffocate them. Coming in contact with the fence, they endeavor to find their way around it, and, as they can not avoid it by taking to the bank, they must of course finally come into the weir. There, being bewildered by the obstacle's turning upon them, they ascend toward the surface of the water, with the view, perhaps, of getting more light on the subject. It appears seldom, if ever, to occur to them to try the bottom again; but they keep swimming about at the top, endeavoring to find an opening through which to escape.

The sun was now up. The hills upon the opposite side of

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the Clearwater lay fair and beautiful in his unclouded light, and the more distant waters of the river—which is here three miles wide—now stirred by a light breeze, were bright with dimpled smiles at his morning greeting. His lustre was also reflected from the white sails of two slowly-gliding vessels, the one far out in the channel before us, the other just beyond the distant extremity of Point Quiet. Yet the shadows of the tall trees on the river's bank covered the weir and some considerable space beyond it, even touching the hull of the little punga, which, with her taper spars, furled canvas, and slight cordage glistening in the early sunshine, lay at anchor about a quarter of a mile to the southward of Otter Point. No one seemed to be stirring aboard of her.

CHAPTER XI.

NETTING THE ROCK.

A four-foot Rock.—Expeditors.—Ike “in for it.”—Mayhew.—The Oystermen.—“Rogues about.”—Chase and Capture of the Periagua.—Net Results.

MAKING fast our canoe to one of the stakes of the weir, we proceeded to explore the interior. It was a moment or two before my eyes became sufficiently accustomed to looking down into the shadow of the little basin, to see clearly what was in it. I saw indistinctly multitudes of small objects gliding about, some quietly, and others in a state of great agitation; but what almost at once attracted my attention, was a large form moving dimly and slowly a little below the surface.

“What is that, Cousin Walter?” I asked, pointing to it. My question was answered by Crowley.

“My golly, Marse Watty!” he exclaimed, “what er rock!” “So it is,” said Cousin Walter. “It must be at least four feet long. Father will be glad of this.”

And then, unable to restrain his delight, and impatient to be the first to give uncle intelligence which he knew would

please him so much, he stood up in the boat, and shouted at the extent of his lungs,

"O—h father! There's a four-'foot' rock in the weir!"

Uncle could not hear what was said, because of the noise of the oars; but the hands, evidently at his order, ceased rowing, and then he called out in return,

"What's the matter, Walter?"

"There's a four-'foot' rock in the weir."

"Give way, boys," I heard uncle say in a loud and cheerful voice; and the large canoe was soon ranged alongside of the weir.

After the boat had been made fast at either end to a stake, the nets were shaken out. The rock, which had dived when Cousin Walter called out so loudly, now rose again near to the surface.

"A magnificent fish, Porringer," observed uncle.

"Yas, marster, er merry fine fish, sah. But I se uffead we can't take him out wid dese nets—too small; I didden think we was gwine to hab so big er fish ter net, or I'd 'er brung er bigger one."

"Uncle Porringer," suggested Crowley, whose palate, like my own, preferred the small fry, "hadden you better take de little fellows out fust? den you hab clare room ter work wid 'im."

"You hush yer jaw, young nigger," said Porringer, who had not forgotten Crowley's enjoyment of his defeat in the boat-race; "dat's all you knows about it. S'pose I nets de crocuses, un de pearch, un de little rocks up, what den? Why, de big rock git scared, un dive down ter de bottom, un maybe git out er de weir."

"But den, Uncle Porringer," remonstrated Crowley, "you on'y skeer de big rock any how, 'cause you can't take him out wid dat net. Den you run de resk uv losin' de little fish too."

"What uv dat?" retorted the old negro, answering only the latter objection, for the former was not so easy to answer; "you git plenty uv small fish in de weir ebery day, but 'tain't ebery day dat you gwine ter git er four-foot rock. But, Marse Watty, can't you make dat silly nigger hole he jaw? He

won't stop, ef you don' make him, tell he's skeered all de fish out uv de weir."

Though this altercation had been carried on in a low tone of voice, the fish were beginning again to exhibit symptoms of alarm. So uncle peremptorily ordered silence, and, the nets being all arranged, the work of fishing the weir began.

The large rock was still near the surface, swimming slowly around the weir, evidently in search of a hole by which to escape. The old negro brought his net along the surface a little in advance of the rock, and, watching his opportunity, suddenly thrust it downward, and brought the meshes over the head and a part of the body of the fish. With considerable effort he lifted it above the water, but the part of the body which was out of the net overbalancing the part which was in it, the rock fell back into the water with a heavy plunge.

"Uncle Porringer," suggested Ike, "s'pose you let me take de udder net, un den when you ketch him by de head I git him by de tail, un so we hab 'im."

As this proposition seemed reasonable it was adopted and put into execution as soon as the fish came up again. It proved to be less feasible than it had at first appeared, as the rock would not hold his tail still to have it netted. The only important result was that Ike, in his anxiety to make his plan successful, fell into the weir himself instead of getting the rock out of it. The only damage which he received, however, was a thorough drenching. Uncle Weatherby and Porringer caught him by the legs as he was plunging into the water with his head downward, and pulled him out feet foremost in a very great hurry.

While this experiment had been in progress Crowley had been quietly at work forming a loop in a piece of rope which was tied to the seat of the small canoe for the purpose of making the boat fast to a fishing-stake when angling on the flats, and as soon as Ike was rescued he began tying the rope to one of the poles of the weir.

"Crowley," said uncle, as soon as he observed him, "what are you doing there?"

"Why, you see, marster, I jes' lets dis loop down right afore

de rock, same as Uncle Porringer did de net, un when I once gits it back uv his gills I guess he's safe unnuf."

"Hear dat foolish young nigger uggin," said Porringer ; "how he talk ! jes' as ef he could hole dat fish."

"'Tain't me dat'll hole 'im," said Crowley, "but de stake."

Crowley's plan, however, met with no favor from any one but myself, either because they did not think that any thing good could come from one whom they looked upon as so insignificant, or because Ike's disaster had given them enough of experiment. But though Crowley's scheme was only laughed at, it was then and is still my belief that it was a good idea, and that if tried it would in all probability have been successful.

"Come," said uncle, "'tis of no use to be wasting time here. Porringer, get into the small canoe with Clarence and Walter, paddle up the creek to Mayhew's, and ask him to lend us a large net. I am determined that the rock shall not be lost for want of trying to save it. Tell him that if he will come with you himself he can have as many fish as he wants. In the mean time I will take Ike and Crowley with me into the Channels, and make them catch some soft crabs for breakfast. Make haste, and get back as soon as you can."

We started at once, and, with such an experienced paddler as the old negro to aid us, it was not long before the boat touched the strand at Mayhew's landing.

A shout soon brought him to the shore. He was a gaunt, weather-beaten man, fully six feet high, with light foxy hair, and though his face was lean, its hue was a ruddy bronze. His dress consisted of a long, loose jacket, having large pockets, and formed of the home-made woolen fabric which in that section of the country is called "yarn," a pair of coarse brown linen trowsers, a pair of rough boots, and an old fur hat, which had long since lost all pretensions to shape.

"Good morning, Mister Watty," he said to cousin ; "won't you come ashore ?"

"No, I thank you, Mr. Mayhew," answered Cousin Walter ; "I am in a great hurry."

Cousin Walter then gave him Uncle Weatherby's message.

"Well, Mister Watty," he said, "I has got a very large net, but I'm afeard 'twon't do to take a four-foot rock, seeing it's rather old and pretty full of holes. Howsoever, I'll go with you, and try to fix it with some twine as we go down the creek."

He went to the house, and soon reappeared with the net, and an old musket on his shoulder. As soon as he jumped into the canoe we shoved off.

"Mr. Mayhew," said Cousin Walter, as we paddled down the stream, "do you know that there's an oyster punga on the flats?"

"Yes," he answered; "it comed there yesterday arternoon. It lays so close under the shore that you can't see it from Old Delight, but I'm allers on the watch for them Eastern Shore varmunts. It's on their account I've brung my musket ul-long."

"You're not going to shoot any of them, I hope?" said I.

"No, young gentleman; not ef they let's me alone, that is to say."

"This is Cousin Clarence Audley, Mr. Mayhew," said Cousin Walter.

"Glad to know you, Mister Audley. You see, yesterday evening about two hours after sundown, one of them tarnal critters comes along here in his cooner" (canoe). "I knowed he was arter creek isheters; but, as I was jest out of 'em then, and wanted some myself, I let's him go on up the creek on disturbed. Well, jest arter sunset, here he comes down the creek agin with a pile of fine isheters in his boat. I was a waiting for him on the shore; and, jest as he got off agin the landing, I calls out to him. 'Hallo, stranger,' says I, 'where are you bound?' 'Where I please,' says he, quite lively. 'Well,' says I, 'that's manners, any how. But them's my isheters, and I wants you to put 'em here in the water, jest by the shore, to be convenient; and, ef you knows what's good for your health you'll do jest what I tell, right smack off the reel.' 'You go to thunder,' says he, very unreasonably. So I picks up my musket, which was a laying in the shore grass at my feet, and pints it at him. That argerment was ennuful fur him, and he left the

isheters where I told him ; but, when he got where he thought he was out of the reach of the gun, he hollered to me that he was a gwine fur to shoot me the very first chance that ever he got. And that's the cause why I takes my musket along with me."

When we arrived at the Channels, we found that Ike and Crowley had succeeded in catching about a dozen soft crabs in the grass which grows in the water near the edge of the shore, and that uncle was all impatience to be at the weir again, being fearful that the rock might escape, and that we should have a very late breakfast. Uncle Porringer and Crowley soon exchanged places again. Mayhew remained in our boat.

As soon as we were in sight of the weir, Mayhew seized the paddle out of Crowley's hand and began paddling vigorously.

"Jest look at them there tarnal Eastern Shore rogues!" he exclaimed. "Pull away, there, Mister Watty; bear a hand, Mister Audley, and let's ketch 'em jest while they're at it."

The cause of this exclamation became apparent to me at the very moment he spoke. A long periagua (a canoe with a square stern) was moored to the weir ; and its occupants, two rough-looking men, were in the very act of lifting out of the water, in a large net, the rock which had caused so much exertion. Fortunately, they were so intent upon their task that they did not at first see us ; and the noise made by the floundering of the huge fish prevented them from hearing the sound of our paddles ; so that we were within a few yards of them before they noticed our approach. As soon as they saw us, they cut loose from the weir and began paddling toward the punga.

"Here, you Crowley," said Mayhew, "take this paddle and work as hard as you ken."

Then seizing his gun, he pointed toward the periagua and exclaimed,

"Stop, you varmunts, or I'll give you a musket-load, right smack off the reel!"

"Don't shoot, Mayhew," exclaimed Cousin Walter ; "it will not do to kill, or even to wound any body, for the sake of a fish."

The men in the periagua hesitated a moment, and then continued pulling toward the punga with all their might.

"There, Mister Watty," said the oyster-guard, indignantly, "ef you hadder kept yur tongue, we'd er had 'em right smack off the reel. I had no ide-ar of shooting 'em; I only wanted to skeer 'em and make 'em stop."

He laid down the gun and took up a gig which happened to be in the boat. It may be necessary to inform the reader that a gig is a short pole with three iron prongs at one end, and is used for catching crabs when they are needed only for bait.

"Pull away, my boys," he said, encouragingly, while bending one of the prongs into the form of a hook, by pressing it against the side of the boat; "pull away hard, and we'll have 'em yit."

The periagua was a slow paddler, and, though she was urged onward by the strength of two powerful men, we gained upon her fast. And we had need to do so; for the heads of two men and the muzzles of a couple of muskets appearing above the hatchway of the little cabin of the punga convinced us that if the pursued were once within gunshot of their vessel their escape and the loss of our fish would be certain.

We pulled with all our might, and the distance between us and the periagua, only a few yards at the beginning of the race, was lessened with every stroke of the paddle. At length our boat was within a foot or two of the stern of the chase, when Mayhew, who was standing on the forward seat of the canoe, brought down the gig, which he had held uplifted, with a powerful blow upon the stern of the periagua, driving the bent prong deeply into the wood. Then, dropping upon his knees to avoid being drawn overboard, he held the gig firmly in his hand, and the two boats came into contact.

"Now, you thieving varmunts," he said, "put down your paddles, and don't you move hand or foot till Mr. Weatherby gits here."

They obeyed him in silence, for he had now resumed his musket; besides, uncle's canoe was approaching fast. It soon ranged alongside of us.

"Mr. Weatherby," said Mayhew, pointing to one of the men

in the periagua, "there's the tarnation villian that I cotch yesterday evenin' stealin' isheters ; and, besides, there's the rock that they jest now stole out of the weir. Ef I was you, I'd have 'em took before a justice and sent to jail, right smack off the reel."

The captives began to beg very hard, and promised that if uncle would let them off, they would leave the river forthwith, and never enter the flats or St. Peter's Creek any more. Then they cried, and talked about their wives and children, saying that they would be distressed and would suffer from want, if their husbands and fathers should be sent to jail and kept there for months or years.

Uncle was touched, and accepted their offer, notwithstanding Mayhew's repeated protest. They were allowed to keep the small fish, of which they had taken a good quantity from the weir ; but the rock was transferred to the large canoe.

We then returned toward the weir to finish the fishing of it; and the punga's men paddled toward their vessel. No sooner, however, had they made sure of a safe distance than the ungrateful fellows poured upon us all, but more especially upon Mayhew—to his ineffable indignation—a torrent of vile abuse. Nevertheless, as they had reason to fear that a posse might be brought to recapture them, they left the river that morning.

As soon as the weir was empty of its finny prisoners—which was not until the sun was two and a half hours high—our boat was sent in advance with the soft crabs and a mess of small fry to be cooked for breakfast. Mayhew accompanied us as far as his landing, taking with him as many fish as he wanted. The large canoe, having now quite a heavy load to carry, followed more leisurely.

"Mr. Audley," said Mayhew, as we parted at his landing, "are yer fond er fishin' with the angle-rod ?"

"Yes," I answered, "I have often fished in the Spring Gardens near Baltimore, and on the flats here too, long ago."

"Well, then," he said, "whenever you and Mr. Walter there take a notion to go out on the flats, jest call by here fur me. I knows good places fur fishin' on every tide ; and I'll take

you where, jest as soon as you throw out your line, the fish will begin to bite right smack off the reel."

We thanked him, and accepted his offer.

As the want of a large net had caused all the trouble that we had had that morning, Uncle Porringer declared that he should always be very careful afterward to be provided with one whenever he went to fish the weir.

CHAPTER XII.

IN THE SHADE.

A sultry Morning at Old Delight.—Cousin Lucy.—The "Preux Chevalier."—Juleps and "Cobblers."—A Clearwater Tradition.

BEFORE we returned to Old Delight the increasing heat of the advancing day had made itself very sensible. As it continued to become more and more intense with the passage of every hour, promising to result in a thunder-storm during the afternoon, we were obliged to don our thinnest dresses, to seek the coolest place, and to keep as still as possible in order to bear it with any approach to comfort. How I envied a group of little negroes whom I saw in the back yard before the kitchen door, romping about with wild abandon, and apparently suffering no inconvenience from the excessive heat! Even they, however, most "affected the shade," getting out of the sunshine as soon as possible whenever the exigencies of their play drove them into it.

After breakfast Uncle Weatherby was engaged in his study, and Aunt Mary in her household duties. Jack, after taking an early breakfast by himself, had been off to school by sunrise to avoid being on his road in the heat of the day. Cousin Walter and myself took from the piazza a couple of large arm-chairs made of white oak withes, and seated ourselves in the shade. Not a breath of air was stirring; the leaves made no movement in the trees over our heads; not the song of a bird was heard—the feathered minstrels had probably sought the deepest shades of the forest. A number of barn-yard fowls

were gathered in the shadow of a large oak-tree that stood by the horse-rack near the outside of the yard gate ; some of them would every now and then roll themselves in the dust, where the frequent stamping of hoofs had prevented any vestige of grass from making its appearance.

We had scarcely taken our seats—Cousin Walter armed with a novel, and I with a volume of poems, to lose or at least to diminish consciousness of the unpleasant condition of the atmosphere in the magic of story and verse—and had not yet commenced reading when we saw Cousin Lucy's pretty face among the flowers that entwined around the parlor window, herself more attractive than them all ; her long raven curls mingled with the leaves and blossoms.

“ May I come out ? ” she asked, with a merry smile. “ If you will let me come, I will send Amanda ” (the mulatto girl who waited on her) “ to Uncle Porringer for a couple of iced juleps for you.”

“ Thank you, sweet coz,” I said ; “ but I had rather have iced water than iced juleps, and your presence than either.”

As I spoke I sprang into the parlor to lead her out by the hand, and brought a chair for her from the piazza.

Cousin Walter laughed heartily.

“ What amuses you so, Cousin Walter ? ” I asked.

“ It is no doubt rude, Clarence,” he answered, “ but I was laughing at you. What is the use of troubling yourself to be so polite to a little girl like Lucy ? Why not keep your courtesy for Miss Lizzie Dalton ? ”

“ Cousin Walter,” I said, “ I might give you a long lecture on politeness—how that true politeness is universal, and much more to that effect, but the weather is too hot for a lecture. To be brief, therefore, I can not avoid being polite, or trying to be so, at least, to every one who wears the female form ; and Cousin Lucy is just as much entitled to be treated politely as any body. Indeed, I take much pleasure,” I added, with a bow to Cousin Lucy, “ in being of service to her.”

“ You are quite a *preux chevalier*, Clarence. Upon my word, if you continue to improve on your views, you will become, by the time you arrive to man’s estate” (Cousin Walter

intimated a little pleasant malice in *that*), “what Sir Gawaine says of Sir Launcelot in the *Morte d’Arthur*, ‘the curtiest knight that ever sat in hall among ladies.’”

“To answer your bantering by common sense, Cousin Walter, I should like to be just what Sir Gawaine describes. It is pleasant to afford pleasure to others. It is pleasant also to be well thought of; and courtesy ‘wins golden opinions’ from all. I am sure Cousin Lucy does not think less of me for being polite to her—do you, cousin?”

“Oh no; but then, Cousin Clarence, you know I am only ‘home people.’”

“If we practice politeness toward ‘home people’—and I need not say to *you*, Cousin Lucy,” I added, with a quizzical glance at Cousin Walter, “that it is at home that true politeness shows itself—it will become a second nature to us elsewhere.”

“I am afraid,” observed Cousin Walter, with an indolent pretense of indifference in his manner, “that, if our conversation keeps in its present tide, we may *drift* into an argument. Let us change the subject—or read.”

“Agreed,” I said, “for I just this moment remember that you promised to tell me, when we were out on the flats this morning, something of that grand old place we saw on the other side of the river.”

“True enough; and I have no objection to tell the story now. But let us have the juleps first. By-the-by, Lucy, you seem to have forgotten your promise.”

“Cousin Clarence wanted only water,” said Lucy, “and there’s a waiter with a pitcher of it and a couple of glasses on the grass beside you.”

“But I didn’t say that I would not have any, sis. Will you take a julep, Clarence?”

“‘Tis too strong for this hot weather, cousin; besides I am not accustomed to strong drink. I felt the julep that I took yesterday too much for my comfort.”

“You are more strong-minded, Cousin Clarence, than I take you to be if you do not learn to take your glass ‘like a man,’ as we say here, before you leave Chittering Neck.”

"Thank you for the compliment!" I interjected.

"You are perfectly welcome to it, I assure you. Few persons, however, as young as you are will run the risk, of their own will, of being called a 'milk-sop.' Don't turn so red in the face—I shall not call you so; I only wish to prepare you for what's coming. By-the-by, there is a magnificent new drink which you can take without any inconvenience; and even Lucy may join you in that. It was invented for warm weather. I learned how to make it in your city last summer, and have put Porringer up to it. What say you to a sherry cobbler?"

"I have not the least objection to it."

"Amanda, tell Porringer to send us two cobblers and a julep."

The drinks were brought and discussed; I had to help Cousin Lucy to finish hers. The reader need not be told what a sherry cobbler is; "Boz," many years after the time of which I write, made that drink famous.

"And now, Cousin Walter," I said, "for the story about that grand old place—what is its name?"

"Sotterly. You can see it from here. You see the mouth of St. Peter's Creek there?"

"Yes."

"Well, look across the river in a line with the mouth of the creek."

"I see the place very plainly, considering the distance. It stands quite grandly amid its tall Lombardy poplar trees."

"I have but little to tell you about the place. The story is concerning a gentleman who formerly owned it. I will tell you what I know of him, as I learned it."

And Cousin Walter began his story.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MASTER OF SOTTERLY; OR, BENEVOLENCE WITHOUT WISDOM.

The Piazza.—The Guest.—A Walk to the Shore.—A Conversation.—The “Domain” of Sotterly.—Mr. Caton.—The Luxury of Giving.—Popularity.—A Reverse.—Summer Friends and faithless Love.—Generous to the last.—The Moral.

I HAVE a picture before my mind's eye which was painted upon my memory in childhood, and its tints are as vivid as if time had made no progress for years.

I was sitting in the piazza here, one calm spring morning before breakfast, with my Virgil on my knee, deeply engaged in conning over my school task in the Bucolics, except when my eyes were raised at times from the book to gaze with a lingering delight on the lovely scene before me. The sun, just risen, was pouring a flood of light of mingled golden and red over the fair plain below us, over the clear and flashing waters of the river, and making most beautiful the distant hills beyond the stream.

While I was thus occupied a guest of my father came from the house into the piazza. He was a tall and handsome gentleman, graceful and elegant in bearing and kind and courteous in speech—one who, to my young fancy, seemed the beau ideal of manly beauty and dignity. After saluting me kindly and placing his hand caressingly on my head, saying that I was a good and studious boy, he began promenading the piazza. At first his walk was frequently interrupted by a conversation which he opened with me on the subject of my studies; and sometimes he would sit beside me awhile and aid me in translating a difficult passage. But these interruptions became less and less frequent, until at length he seemed to become entirely abstracted, and ceased to notice me.

Having mastered my lesson my attention was exclusively attracted to Mr. Caton. As I watched him slowly travers-

ing the piazza from end to end, the cheerfulness and very lightness of heart which the bright sunshine, the fair landscape, the achievement of my task, and, more than all, his own kind language and manner had awakened within me, gradually passed away and were succeeded by the mingled emotions of pity, sympathy, and ineffable tenderness. That noble countenance, with its high and expansive forehead, large dark eyes, and finely-chiseled mouth, which bore the impress of habitual humanity and gentleness, was clouded by a deepening melancholy. Whenever his walk brought him to the northern end of the piazza he would stop, sometimes for several minutes, with his gaze fixed upon the opposite shore of the river. He frequently clasped his hands, as if in great distress; and at one time I heard him say, in a low voice, "Oh, Sotterly, Sotterly! home of my fathers!"—and at another, "Had I been born poor I had not perhaps been unhappy."

I remember being impressed with the thought that it was very singular that one so kind and benevolent to others should himself be the subject of suffering. And it was this idea of his character which made me feel such tender pity for him.

We were called in to breakfast; and Mr. Caton, though at first much subdued in manner and rather silent, soon recovered his usual self-possession.

He returned home that day while I was at school.

The next morning being a school holiday, I walked down to the river with a relative who was sojourning with us at the time—Cousin Sally Somers, who is now dead. A bright and lovely young woman she was, whose fair countenance seems again before me, and the soft and musical tones of whose voice I can never forget. She was passionately fond of poetry; and Mr. Caton, in his frequent visits to my father's, almost always brought some volume for her perusal. I remember that I procured in this way my first reading of Petrarch's Sonnets.

We were sauntering silently along the shore of the long, narrow, and level point which divides the waters of the Clearwater from St. Peter's Creek, when it occurred to me to ask her the cause of Mr. Caton's grief. I had intended to do so

at the first opportunity, but the incidents of our cheerful walk had hitherto made me forgetful.

"Cousin Sally," I asked, "do you not consider Mr. Caton a very good man?"

"Yes, Walter," she answered, "he has a heart as kind and generous as ever beat in a human bosom."

"Can you tell me what it is that troubles him?"

"Why do you ask?" she said.

"Because," I answered, "I saw him yesterday morning wringing his hands, while he looked across the river, and heard him exclaim, 'Oh, Sotterly, Sotterly!' (that, you know, is the name of his place,) and he also said that if he had been born poor he might not have been unhappy."

"He meant, I suppose," said Cousin Sally, "that in that case he would not have known the remorse which must arise in a soul so noble as his from having spent in reckless liberality a fortune, of which the mere income, if wisely expended and with a discriminating generosity, might have done so much good, and have made him to the suffering as a ministering angel. He was thinking, also, it is probable, of the bitterness of experiencing the ingratitude of those whom he has loved and served."

"Will you tell me his history, my cousin, if you know it?"

"I do know a part of it, Walter," she answered, "and will tell you what I know with pleasure; for you may learn from it something which will be of service to you in after life. But first let us walk farther down the shore and seek a seat in the shade of the bank."

Where the tall cliff of the river subsides abruptly to the sandy point which we were traversing, a rough and stunted old locust-tree had slidden down from the verge above. The trunk of this tree, supported at the end toward the bank by its branches, furnished us with a comfortable resting-place. The waters of the river, here three miles wide, sparkled before us in the golden sunshine, and the waves murmured their low and plaintive song at our feet, as my cousin related her story.

"Do you see the mouth of Cockle's Creek?" she began.

"There!—directly opposite to us, on the other side of the river."

"Very plainly."

"From the northern shore of that creek, away to Sotterly Point (the extreme point visible there to the right), and to as great a distance beyond it, and extending far back into the land, comprising several large plantations, lies the domain (for so it deserves to be called) of Sotterly. At an early age Mr. Caton was left by the death of his parents sole possessor of this immense estate. So numerous were his negro slaves that, scattered as they were over different plantations, scarcely a moiety of them were known to him by sight. Indeed, partly by way of pre-eminence and partly to distinguish him from others of his name, he was called in his native county the Master of Sotterly.

"Of course no expense was spared in educating the inheritor of so fine an estate; and, having an excellent intellect for the acquisition of knowledge, there were few studies which he did not master. His naturally kind and liberal disposition and his earnest desire to win love by conferring pleasure caused him to spend by far the greater part of his allowance, which was large, in the gratification of his youthful companions.

"The adulation and flattery which this liberality caused to be rendered to him induced in him a habit of indulging to a reckless extent in what, in his case, may be called the luxury of giving; and when his studies were finished and he came into possession of his property, this amiable but dangerous habit increased with continued indulgence. It is true that, in all probability, he in many instances relieved the sufferings of the deserving poor and banished care from many a worthy heart; but by far the greater portion of the sums thus expended must, of course, have become the prey of the crafty and vile, who knew his kindly nature and imposed upon it.

"This amiable and generous nature won him, however, many sincere friends; and these endeavored to check his profuse expenditure by assuring him that the most princely fortune could not long abide the demands of his boundless and indiscriminate liberality. But their efforts were in vain. His

usual answer was that the greatest pleasure which the possession of wealth could afford was the gratification of enabling others to partake of its enjoyment. A true and noble maxim is this; but Mr. Caton did not act upon it wisely.

"As it frequently occurred that the money which he happened to have in hand was not sufficient to meet the constant demands made upon his charity and friendship, and as purses and credit were every where at his command, he fell into the ruinous habit of making debts, still blindly considering his wealth as inexhaustible.

"At length it became whispered about that Mr. Caton's liabilities were so immense that even his magnificent estate would not be sufficient to meet them. The mass of his creditors were at first slow to doubt the safety of their claims, but when at length it was noised abroad that one or two of the most timid of them, who had called upon him with notes or accounts long since due, had been put off with promises of payment, and that he who had been so generous was now no longer able to be just, they were almost all at once aroused to action, and the docket of the county court at the next term was burdened with suits in which he was defendant.

"The amount of the claims against him was no doubt much increased by a careless custom which he had of paying every demand made upon him, without examining into its merits, thus furnishing a strong inducement to the unprincipled to add false items to their accounts.

"His property was placed in the hands of trustees for the benefit of his creditors, and the piteous truth soon became apparent that he, who less than ten years before had commenced his career of manhood as the master of hundreds of thousands, was cast adrift at the age of thirty to make his way through the world with but a few hundred dollars in his pocket. And yet he was never a votary of either the tavern bar or the gaming-table.

"I have often heard him say that his grief at the loss of his property was but a trifle compared to the bitterness which he experienced at finding that it had been lavished for the most part on unworthy objects, and that his unthinking generosity

had in many instances only given power to the unprincipled and wicked. Too late he discovered that he had too often mistaken the cant of covetous hypocrisy for the genuine voice of need, and the protestations of hollow-hearted and self-seeking sycophants for the vows of sincere friendship.

"There is one circumstance to which he has never been known to allude, and which must have been more bitter than all his other griefs combined. The beautiful lady to whom he was engaged to be married was one of the first to follow the example of fortune in deserting him. This, however, should be considered as more than repaying the ruin of his property, for the loss of no estate, however great, can be so productive of unhappiness as a marriage without love.

"He has since been enabled to repurchase the mansion-house at Sotterly and several hundred adjoining acres with money which he received for government claims, and has, of course, enough to supply his own reasonable wants, and even to enable him to administer with discriminating prudence to the wants of his poorer neighbors. But the wounds which his kindly feelings and originally unsuspecting nature have received appear to be not yet healed. You will not be surprised at this when I mention, by way of example, but one among many instances of ingratitude which he has experienced.

"At the county seat, a village of a few hundred inhabitants, resided a family who paid constant and obsequious court to Mr. Caton in his days of prosperity. When business or pleasure brought him to that place he was invariably pressed to make Mr. Benton's house his home during his stay. This invitation was always declined when the acceptance of it could be avoided with politeness, for whenever Mr. Caton visited the family he was absolutely burdened with attentions. Dinner parties and evening dances given in honor of him followed each other in quick succession, and every effort was made by the family to cause him to believe that they entertained a very high regard for him.

"Mr. Caton was naturally desirous of making some return for all these attentions, and when at length he was made cognizant, though with much apparent delicacy on the part of the

family, of a certain circumstance which showed that Mr. Benton was in want of a large sum of money, he advanced double the amount required, for which he refused to receive any written acknowledgment. Mr. Benton, of course, protested eternal gratitude, but he has not yet paid the debt.

"Some years afterward, when Mr. Caton's prospects were entirely changed, he came to the county seat to attend to his suits in court. He had no money to pay his expenses there, but this, he thought, was a small matter, since he had such a friend as Mr. Benton living in the village. Arriving at this individual's house a little after dinner, the cold remains of the meal were set before him. This was a great contrast to the treatment which he had formerly received there, and the same change was observable in the manners of the family toward him.

"When he left the house that afternoon to go to court he was very coldly requested to return to supper, but necessity caused him to accept the invitation, slight as it was. After supper Mrs. Benton carelessly apologized for being able to offer him only a pallet on the floor, mentioning as an excuse that the house was crowded with visitors. In the days of his wealth his claim to the best accommodation the house afforded was considered paramount to all others. The difference was too great for his fortitude, and he had scarcely time to leave the house before he burst into tears.

"When he made his situation known to the landlord of one of the village inns, the latter generously insisted that he should board and lodge at his house free of charge during the session of the court, and treated him during his stay with the same respect and attention which he had shown toward him when he was the wealthiest man in the county."

Many years after I had listened to Cousin Sally's story, I met Mr. Caton at a relative's of his with whom he was then living. His hair was now silvered. His old habits of reckless liberality and inattention to the management of his affairs had returned and again made him destitute.

There was with us at the time a gentleman of the name of Ashley, who had some years before purchased a mill-seat

which had formerly belonged to Mr. Caton, and to which the latter was said, on account of some defect in the land papers, still to possess the legal title. It appeared that this was the first time Mr. Caton had met this gentleman since the flaw in the latter's title had been discovered, and a remark which he made to Mr. Ashley on this occasion showed that courtesy and benevolence were still predominant traits in his character.

Our host, Mr. Ashley, and myself, were engaged in a conversation, while Mr. Caton sat by the window looking out upon the river that flowed by, apparently in a deep and melancholy reverie. Suddenly he aroused from his abstraction, and, turning toward us, said,

"I suppose, Mr. Ashley, that you have heard that I still have a legal claim to the mill-seat which you purchased some years ago. But you need feel no uneasiness on that account. However I may have been defrauded by the man who sold you the property, you honestly paid for it, and your title shall never be disturbed by me."

When I last heard of Mr. Caton, he was still living, but, from brooding over his misfortunes, had become a miserable hypochondriac.

"Your story is a genuine old-fashioned one, Cousin Walter," I said, when Mr. Caton's history was finished, "and, like most old-fashioned stories, it bears an excellent moral. Will you please to put it into form for us?"

"I will give you my view of it, Clarence, with pleasure. What I have related is, of course, a mere outline of Mr. Caton's history; but I think that this truth may be very clearly deduced from it:

"Even benevolence, though united to a fine intellect, and having at control an immense estate, can not render its possessor happy unless it be accompanied by prudence and moderation, and a simple desire to do good."

"Very true," I observed. "'Be ye, therefore, wise as serpents and harmless as doves.'"

THE OLD PLANTATION.

CHAPTER XIV.

"COLORED" CHARACTERS.

A Country Invitation.—Aunt Kate's Quarter and Aunt Kate.—Uncle Jack and the Broiled Herring.—Clotilda, the "Colored" Genius.

A LIGHT breeze had set in from the southwest and made the atmosphere much less oppressive ; and the time passed on in a gay conversation, in which Cousin Lucy sometimes bore a share.

It was near midday when a negro boy, dressed in jacket and trowsers of blue cotton, the collar and cuffs of his upper garment being trimmed with red of the same fabric and his black leather cap having a red band around it (all of said adornment being intended to represent livery), rode in full gallop up to the yard palings near which we were seated. Both his horse and himself were in a state of profuse perspiration.

"Good-day, marster un young missus," he said. "Marse Walter, missus sen's compl'munts, un says de young ladies is dare. You mus' come ober dis ebenin' un bring de young gen'lum dat come frum Baltimore yisserday."

"Tell Mrs. Wilton we thank her, and will certainly come—shall we not, Clarence?"

"Yes," I answered, "unless a thunder-storm should prevent us."

"I do not think there is much cause to fear that," said Cousin Walter, "now that this wind is blowing from the southwest.—I say, boy, do not ride your horse so hard in such hot weather.—You see, we do things of this sort in a very plain and natural way here, Clarence," he observed as the negro boy rode off.

"So much the better," I said. "By-the-by, Cousin Walter, who do you think will be there?"

"I know whom you are thinking of," he answered; "*she* will certainly be there. Mrs. Wilton is an aunt of Miss Lizzie Dalton, you remember."

"Here comes another rider," said Cousin Lucy, before I could rejoin; "Dr. Turner's boy, I think, and no doubt with medicine for Aunt Kate. I must go over to her quarter and give it to her; she should have had it an hour ago."

Her impression was correct. The boy, after handing her the medicine, with a note from the doctor containing directions for administering it and also an apology for not sending it sooner, immediately turned and rode away again.

"That negro lad," observed Cousin Walter, "is quite a business character, and is evidently proud of being thought such. Did you notice, Clarence, how he tried to look very serious and dignified?"

"No doubt," I answered, "he considers himself a sort of unfledged doctor."

"Run into the house, Amanda," said Lucy to her attendant, who sat on the grass by her side, "and bring my 'flat' and an umbrella."

"May I go with you, cousin, to see Aunt Kate?" I asked.
She assented.

"We are leaving you alone, Cousin Walter."

"Never mind me; I have my book here."

Aunt Kate's quarter was one of those mentioned before as standing in the edge of the wood to the northward of the dwelling-house. It was the counterpart of almost every plantation negro-hut which I have seen. The ground plan embraced a space of about twenty-five by fifteen feet. The walls were constructed of large unhewn logs, the interstices between which were filled with a plaster made of mixed clay and straw; and the roof was made of clap-boards; but the structure was weather-proof. The space down stairs was divided by a partition of rough pine boards into two rooms. The front apartment—whose earthen floor, swept "as clean as a penny," was beaten by use until it was as hard as brick, and smoother—was used as a kitchen and sitting-room. It had a wide fire-place, the chimney of which was made of short logs piled upon each other and thickly plastered with clay on the inside. The inner division, which was called "the cabin," had a rough plank floor, and was used as a sleeping-room.

Each room was furnished with a couple of windows which opened upon hinges, and had each four panes of glass. Above these two rooms was a loft, to which access was had by a ladder from the outer room ; this loft contained two divisions also, the one of which was used as a sleeping-apartment, the other as a place for storing family provisions and other things.

Several young negroes of both sexes were playing in the shade before the door when we arrived ; for Aunt Kate had a large number of children. The dress of each of them consisted of a single garment made of coarse brown cotton ; that of the boys reaching to the knees, that of the girls to the ankles. They made way for us with a great show of civility ; all of them staring at me, as a stranger, with curiosity mingled with awe. One of them, a sickly-looking little girl of about five years old, came up shyly to that side of Cousin Lucy opposite to me and softly kissed her hand.

"How do you do, Tilly ?" said Lucy, in a very tender tone of voice, and putting her hand caressingly on the child's head. "You must know, Cousin Clarence, that Tilly is my pet ; she is of such an affectionate nature, and then her health is so delicate."

The little girl looked at her with eyes that beamed with love as she received a piece of cake which my sweet cousin gave her out of Amanda's basket ; she evidently most appreciated it as her young mistress's gift.

"How is your mother, Nanny ?" said Lucy to the oldest of the children.

"Better, thank'e, miss ; she's setting up."

"Who is with her ?"

"Sall, miss."

Lucy entered the quarter ; I remained outside of the door, but could hear the conversation that took place within.

"Good-day, Aunt Kate."

"Lord love you, Miss Lucy ; 'tis so good in you ter come un see poor Aunt Kate when she's sick. I loves you fur it—I does, indeed, Miss Lucy—jes' de same as ef you was one er my own chillern."

"How do you feel to-day, aunty ?"

"Much better, thank'e, miss—bress de Lord. I shall soon be ubbout uggin. Sall, git Miss Lucy er gourd er water; I know she mus' be dry walkin' through dis hot sun. Young missus, will you hab some groun' apples?" (green apples covered in the ground until they are mellowed) "one er de boys fotch some nice ones home las' night."

"Thank you, aunty, I will with pleasure. Cousin Clarence Audley is at the door; do you remember him?"

"Dat's de young marster dat use ter go ter school here?"

"Yes."

"I remember him very well, miss.—Sall, ask Marse Clarence ter come in. Tell him Aunt Kate wants ter see 'im."

I entered on receiving the invitation. The furniture of the outer room consisted of a cupboard made of pine, one or two pots and kettles, a plain deal table, on which stood a bucket of water with a cleanly-scoured gourd for a drinking vessel, and a few benches and home-made chairs. In the inner room, beside one of the windows was a clean-looking bed, covered with a patchwork of different patterns of calico put together "in most admired disorder," and resting on a rough frame-work fastened to the floor. Near the opposite window was a small looking-glass, under which was a little three-legged pine table. One or two old chairs finished the list of furniture of the room, except the large old-fashioned arm-chair, whose original color could no longer be distinguished, which was occupied by the sick woman. I shook hands with her when I entered.

"Dat's jes' like you, Marse Clarence," she said, "always perlite ter every body. Un how do you do, marster? un how is ole marster un missus, un de chillern?"

"They were all well, I thank you, aunty, when I parted from them a few days ago."

"I'se glad ter hear it, sah.—How much he *is* like his father used ter be, Miss Lucy, de fust time I eb'r seed Marse Willy. Dat wus when he come ter de wedding party here arter Marse John—he was my *young* marster den—wus married to Marse Willy's sister, my missus dat is. I 'members well dat I thought he wus de *wery* bes' lookin' young gent'l'um dat I eber sot my eyes on."

I also accepted the offerings of Aunt Kate's simple hospitality, a ground apple and a gourd of cold water fresh from the spring. Chittering-Neck is remarkable for the purity and coldness of its spring water. Pumps, and even wells by-the-way, had not found their way into that Hundred at the time of which I write; and only in a very few instances have they succeeded in making an entrance there yet.

"Where is Uncle Jack?" asked Lucy. "Has he had any return of his ague and fever?"

"Dey aint come back any more, I thank'e, miss. He felt so well uggin dis mornin' dat he's gone down long uggo tud de creek ter ketch some sarf crabs."

"He will almost certainly be sick again, then."

"Oh, no, honey; puttin' his feet ullittle inter salt water ain't er gwine ter hurt 'im."

"But the hot sun will, Aunt Kate," said Lucy. "He ought to have been back long ago; for father says that the tide was right for soft crabs early this morning."

"Oh, he ain't gwine ter stay out in de sun, chile," said Aunt Kate, a little "miffed." "Jack's ole unnuf ter know better den dat. He wus gwine ter stay tell dis ebenin' at Uncle Tom's quarter near de shore at de head er de creek, un git one uv his boys ter bring de crabs ober."

Lucy administered the medicine to Aunt Kate with her own hands—although the patient seemed very desirous that it should be left to be taken after we were gone—and then emptied from Amanda's basket on the table some delicate food suited to the palate of a convalescent.

"Now be sure, dear Aunt Kate, not to eat any of the soft crabs, if Uncle Jack sends any home," was Lucy's last injunction before our departure; "they will be certain to make you worse."

"Well now, ain't it quare, Marse Clarence," observed Aunt Kate—and I do not know to this day whether she spoke in admiration or satire, though I suspect that the latter was intimated—"ain't it mighty quare ter see Miss Lucy look un hear her talk so much like ole missus? Bress her soul, ef 'twus ole missus herse'f talkin' ter one er de children out dere,

it couldden be more like. I tell you what, young marster, dere aint many young missuses like my young missus—de Lord bress her!"

So with much formality, and a great deal of "young missusing" and "young mastering"—polite talking, as the negroes consider it—on the part of the old lady, we took our departure. I had the enjoyment of witnessing a very amusing scramble among the young folks around the door of the quarter after a few cents which I threw to them. As the author of "Swallow Barn" has already so well described such a scene, I leave the reader with the aid of that description to imagine mine. As little Tilly was too weakly to scramble among the rest I gave her a small piece of silver.

"Why did you insist, Cousin Lucy," I asked, as we walked homeward, I holding the umbrella over her head to shield her from the sun, "upon the old lady's taking the powders from your own hand? Her request seemed to me, I must confess, a reasonable one."

"To be certain, that the powders were not thrown away, cousin. Negroes, like most other people, very much dislike taking medicine; it is also difficult to restrict them to a proper diet. An incident that occurred last week in Uncle Jack's sickness shows how little they can be depended on in such matters."

"A case in point," Cousin Lucy, as we say at law."

"If you choose. They seem to think that if the doctor *supposes* that his medicine has been taken and the diet recommended by him submitted to it is not actually necessary that either should be *done*."

"That is 'quare,' as Aunt Kate would say."

"Uncle Jack had the daily ague, and Dr. Turner had left very exact directions with Aunt Kate in relation to giving him his physic and as to what he should eat. Uncle Jack, it seems, had a longing after a broiled herring, and succeeded in persuading Aunt Kate in preparing one for him. The next time the doctor called he found his patient worse than he had expected."

"You have been giving him something, Kate," said the doctor, 'that he should not have eaten.'

"Deed un deed, doctor," said Kate, "I 'ain't gib' im nuffin but what you said he mout take."

"We must relieve the stomach, however," said the doctor."

An emetic was administered and the fish made its appearance.

"Aha!" exclaimed the doctor, "I thought so. Now, how did that fish get into your stomach, Jack?"

"De blessed Lord knows, sah," answered the old man; "I 'ain't had nuffin ter do wid it."

Cousin Lucy finished her story as we mounted the steps of the piazza. I have a dim impression that the incident, or one like it, has already been in print; but it is, nevertheless, original here, properly speaking, for it occurred precisely when, where, and as I tell it.

A negro girl met us at the door. Her dress was neat, and her whole appearance was tidy; yet she looked exceedingly strange. Her complexion was essential black ultimated; her features were very regular for one of her race, her teeth white, her form symmetrical; but her eyes, remarkably bright, with a wild, unsettled glance, gave to her whole countenance a weird, or rather elfish expression.

"Marse Lucy un Miss Clarence," was the singular address given to us by this girl, "dinner's ready on de table for you."

Whereupon she carried herself in a whirling dance-like motion around us to take the same message to Cousin Walter, who still sat under the shade.

"Who is that queer being?" I asked of Cousin Lucy.

"Her name is Clotilda. Your fellow-passenger, Mr. Worthington, says that under 'expanding circumstances' she might have been a genius; in her present condition she is only eccentric. She can make you rhymes all day long, and is a great help to the corn-bank singers, furnishing them with any number of jingling lines for the corn-husking season, and with tunes for them too; for she can make melodies as well as rhymes."

"I should like to hear her rhyme, and sing her own original airs also."

"Oh, she does not rhyme for the asking, but only when in the wood, and then whether asked or not. As to her singing, she has such an unearthly, screeching voice, that those who can not prevent her music run away from it. She is only listened to by the negroes willingly when she is teaching them a new tune."

"She is quite an original; I should like to know more of her."

"You will have opportunities enough before your visit is over."

At this moment Cousin Walter joined us, and we went in to dinner.

CHAPTER XV.

LADY LIGHTFOOT.

An After-dinner Enterprise.—Taming the Blooded Mare.—"Off like a Rocket,"—Leaping the Gate.—The Conquest.

SOON after dinner Cousin Walter directed Crowley to go down to the meadow and bring up Bay Surrey and Pacolet, and to place them in the stable to be ready for use when it should be time for us to go to Mrs. Wilton's.

"Who is to ride Pacolet, Cousin Walter?" I asked.

"You, Clarence."

"Well, Pacolet is a very fine little animal, and I have nothing to say against his character; but I prefer a steed that is spirited and fiery, and will give its rider employment while he is on its back. I heard Crowley speak of a blooded mare, Lady Lightfoot."

"Why, Clarence, she is the wildest animal and the hardest to govern on the place. She would throw you before you got twenty yards."

"I am not at all afraid of trying her. You forget what a jockey I used to be when a boy."

"No, I have not forgotten; but you have been out of practice so long."

"I beg your pardon. We have livery stables in Baltimore, and I ride very often."

"You do not often see such animals as Lady Lightfoot in a livery stable. However, if you feel confidence in yourself, you are as welcome to her as to any animal on the plantation. Indeed, she needs being placed under the saddle, she is ridden so little; for every body on 'the place' is afraid of mounting her but old Meshach, who is the best horseman among us. Did you ever hear about old Meshach breaking the mule for father?"

"No."

"I will tell it to you presently. Let us have done with Lady Lightfoot first. I would advise you to give her an experimental ride before we start for Mrs. Wilton's. She is now in the stable."

"Have her brought out at once. I long to try her."

"So soon after dinner?"

"That makes no difference; my digestion is not weak."

Crowley was directed to bring her out and to be particular to put her in a snaffle. He soon appeared leading her by the bridle. I think she was as beautiful an animal as I ever saw; rather below the ordinary size, of a dark sorrel color, and of exquisite symmetry. The lines of her body were beautifully curved, her legs straight and tapering, ending in slim fetlocks and fairy hoofs; and her neck, broad at the shoulders and tapering rapidly toward the small and well-shaped head, was slightly arched. Her step had the peculiar catlike spring which indicates great activity. As she came out of the stable with her head proudly elevated, and with a prancing sidelong motion that approached to dancing, while her bright dark eyes flashed with a wild and restless glance from one object to another, I saw that I had no easy task before me. I rather liked the prospect, however.

As I advanced to mount her she looked at me askant with a suspicious glance, and shied off, throwing her head up defiantly.

"She has some bad tricks, Cousin Walter," I observed.

"You had better give it up, Clarence," he remarked.

"Not by any means," I replied; "on the contrary, I shall try, with your assent, to cure her of evil habits before my visit is over."

Just at this moment I saw Uncle Weatherby, Aunt Mary, and Cousin Lucy coming out upon the piazza. Fearing farther objection I placed my left hand on the mare's mane, grasped it firmly, and, almost before she had time to know what I was about, I was on her back. In an instant she reared and stood almost erect upon her hind legs. I heard a scream in concert from the piazza, and then the voice of Uncle Weatherby.

"All's right," he said; "there's no danger. He sits as firmly as a rock."

Different means must be used to break different animals. I had seen in Lady Lightfoot's eyes that she had a proud but not a savage temper. I patted her on the mane and spoke to her soothingly but firmly in such a manner as to convey to her the impression that I would use no violence unless it should be absolutely necessary, but that I was determined to have my way. Horses have more intelligence than those not acquainted with them would suppose. At first the mare was too much excited to be aware of any thing but the fact that there was some one on her back to whom she was not accustomed; had I used the whip this state of things would have continued for a much longer time. For a minute or two one high wild leap succeeded another rapidly. Occasionally she would stand for a few seconds so straight with her fore feet high in the air that her balance was almost lost, and there was danger of her falling backward. I was prepared, however, should such an event have occurred, to slip from under her when in the act of falling.

By this time the number of spectators had considerably increased. The white family and all the slaves about the house and kitchen were gathered along the palings of the yard. Every now and then—when the bounds and plunges of the animal were most violent—subdued screams and exclamations were heard among them, and occasionally the cheering voice of Uncle Weatherby assuring the ladies that there was no danger.

After a while the struggles of the mare began to diminish in violence ; and at length she stood still, but trembling in nervous excitement. At this instant the negroes thoughtlessly gave way to their feelings of relief, and raised an exulting shout. The noise was instantly quelled by Uncle Weatherby's low-voiced but stern "Silence, you thoughtless blockheads!" but the mare was off down the lane like lightning. Fortunately I had not been off my guard an instant. The only danger was in being thrown by the sudden start; for the mare was already conquered. It was only terror that had startled her. A gradually tightened rein, and a gentle "wo-ah!" several times repeated, brought her up before she had gone two hundred yards.

"Well done, Clarence," said uncle ; "I am glad to see that you have not lost your knowledge of horse-craft. At first I was disposed to be angry with Walter for letting you run the risk."

"I assured Cousin Walter that there was no danger."

"Oh, I am pleased, as the affair has turned out, that you had a chance of subduing her. Why, it was considered dangerous for any white person to come near her. I am getting too stiff myself to have tried her; and Walter here did not like the trouble, and, indeed, I did not like him to run the risk. You will now have a handsome and spirited animal to ride during your sojourn with us."

"Thank you, uncle. Has Lady Lightfoot ever jumped a fence?"

"No."

"May I try her mettle at the gate down the lane?"

"There is too much risk in that, Clarence," he said hesitatingly.

Aunt Mary and Cousin Lucy united their entreaties that I would not undertake so dangerous an experiment.

"I feel perfectly convinced, I assure you," I said, "that there is no danger whatever. The mare has already proved herself capable of performing the feat. I wish to strengthen my control over her now while she is in an obedient state."

My confidence somewhat reassured them, and a reluctant assent was given.

I put the mare to a slow trot until we came to the gate, and then made her put her throat against it, both to measure its height and to give her a conception of what she would have to achieve. The gate was about five and a half feet high. I then cantered her back about one hundred yards, and returned at full speed. The intelligent animal seemed to understand the manœuvre. When within a few feet of the gate she stooped back upon her haunches, and then springing into the air with a bound that exerted every muscle in her body, went over it with a flying leap.

When I returned to the yard gate every face was bright with pleasure that the danger was past and the feat accomplished.

"You ride like a knight, Clarence," said uncle. "If you lived in the country, where you could take good care of Lady Lightfoot, I would make you a present of her; you deserve to own her."

He and Cousin Walter shook hands with me; Aunt Mary gave me one of her sweet smiles; but Cousin Lucy's look of admiration was more pleasant to me than all.

Before I handed Lady Lightfoot over to Crowley I smoothed her mane with my hand and patted her softly on the neck, addressing her in a soothing voice by pet names. She neighed in a low tone and rubbed her head gently against my shoulder. And this conquest was achieved without a touch of the whip or spur.

CHAPTER XVI.

MESHACH.

The African Prince.—Negro Superstitions.—"Tricking."—Meshach and the Mule.—Expedients.—*Carried away* by Triumph.—On the Road.—"On the Fence."

"MESHACH," began Cousin Walter, while we were dressing for Mrs. Wilton's, "is a direct importation from Africa. He was purchased, when a young man, by my grandfather, from a slave-ship which visited the Clearwater about the close of

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last century. He claims to have been a prince in his own country, and bears himself with great hauteur toward the rest of the negroes on the plantation here, and always speaks to them in the tones of a superior. He is much respected and feared by them, partly, I suppose, on account of this claim of royal descent, but principally, no doubt, because he is supposed to possess the power of 'tricking.' The negroes, as you are aware, I think, still retain many of the superstitions of Africa, handed down by oral tradition from generation to generation, and kept alive, till recently, by newly imported slaves, and these superstitions still remain, for the most part at least, even with those who become professed members of the Christian church. The belief in 'tricking' is universal among them. You know what 'tricking' is?"

"I have a general idea that the person who has the power to 'trick' can put evil spells on those whom he dislikes, mostly affecting their bodily health."

"You are right. The mental health also, they think, can be affected. If a negro goes crazy, he is thought by his fellows, in nine cases out of ten, to be tricked. The fever and ague—that mysterious disease which returns so regularly at stated periods, leaving its victims in the mean time, in comparatively good health—is in some cases considered by the negroes to be the result of 'tricking.' Their belief in this respect, however, is somewhat shaken by the fact that white people are also liable to it; for they doubt whether white people can be tricked."

"Have you ever heard any of the hands," I asked, "complain of Meshach using his evil powers against them?"

"Not much, recently. If they speak of such matters at all, they do so very cautiously, making the confidant promise profound secrecy; for they fear that Meshach would put the spell on them more strongly, if he heard of their talking of it. Old Jack, however, who fears Meshach less than any other hand on the place does, declares that he is tricked now."

"I heard Aunt Kate say this morning," I observed, "that Jack was well of his ague and fever."

"Oh, Jack is not one of those," said Cousin Walter, "who

believeague and fever to be the result of ‘tricking.’ He says that Meshach has put a live lizard into his arm, and that it keeps him always in bad health.”

“I never heard any thing like that in all my life. What does he show for it ?”

“There is something hard directly under the skin that resembles a lizard in shape. It is a glandular swelling, I think.”

“Do you put any faith in this ‘tricking,’ Cousin Walter ?”

“Certainly not. I attribute Meshach’s influence to the strength of his will. I have seldom seen any one who was more resolute in having his own way. They say that he had much influence with grandfather ; and father, I know, does not like to cross him. This remark, by the way, recalls me to my story about Meshach’s breaking the mule.

“This affair happened some years ago. As you remember nothing about it, it must have occurred since those pleasant days when we were school-mates.

“A drover stopped here one day in summer with a number of mules for sale. Among them was a handsome young animal of a beautiful brown color, and fine shape, which my father—who was then reading *Gil Blas*, or some other story of Spanish life—bought to have trained for the saddle.

“It was well for the drover’s bargain that he took his departure soon after the sale was made ; for, when one of the negro boys went an hour or so afterward to the stable, where the mule had been previously placed, to take the animal to water, she kicked him so violently that he was confined to bed for a week with the bruises.

“Father was much chagrined at being ‘taken in ;’ but Meshach was delighted when he heard that the mule was so savage. I do believe that he likes to have a hard job to execute. He begged father to let him undertake to break her the next morning—for this request was preferred in the evening, and Meshach had come over from his quarter after his day’s work was over to make it—and declared that he would so tame her spirit before dinner that a child could ride her. Father consented ; and the old negro went away as much pleased as if he had received a valuable present.

"The next morning, immediately after breakfast, the mule was brought into the outer yard near the horse-rack, and father, I, Uncle Jim, Uncle Jack, and several of the young negroes, too young to work, gathered there to see how Meshach would accomplish his purpose.

"'It occurs to me, Meshach,' said father, 'that I have seldom seen you on horseback, and then on the gentlest animals on the place. It is a serious thing to undertake to 'break' that mule. She has a vicious-looking eye.'

"'Jes' you see here, mossy,' said Meshach, 'dat's de wery reason. De niggers on de plantation says I feared ter ride er sperrited hoss, coss I rides de easy annermuls, coss 'taint wuf de trouble fur de udder hosses on de place. I jes' want ter show um now dat when I says I'se gwine ter do er thing, I does it. Dain't one uv um ken ride dat mule. Jes' look at er. I say, Jim, does you want 'ter ondertake er?'

"'Druther not,' replied Jim.

"'What does you say ter er, Jack?'

"'Don't want nuffin ter do wid er.'

"'Now you see, mossy,' continued Meshach, 'ef I breaks dis mule dey're gwine ter let me ullone ubabout hosses.—Why didnen you put de saddle on?' he asked the boy who had brought the mule from the stable.

"'Golly!' was the answer, 'I had trouble unnough ter git de bridle on, let ullone de saddle. But bareback is better ef you wants ter break er. Ain't it, Uncle Jack?'

"'Sartin sure it is,' answered Jack. 'But den you better put de saddle on, coss maybe he wants ter ride easy un genteel, un den maybe he's usfeared ter ride er without er saddle.'

"'I aint usfeard er nothin', sah,' said Meshach, with a savage look at Jack; 'un dat you knows well unnuff?'

"Without any hesitation he advanced to the mule to mount her; but a sudden kick on the shin with one of her hind feet made him almost swear with rage and pain, and gave him to understand very forcibly that he must be on his guard.

"He then took hold of the bridle, and so approached her in such a way that she could not use her hind feet against him, and by a sudden spring—for he was very active, and is still,

in fact—placed himself on her back. He was off again immediately head foremost over her head. She never offered to move from the spot; as if she had no fear of him and was determined to see the fun out. He again mounted her and was again thrown immediately in the same manner.

“‘Meshach,’ said father, ‘it is pure folly for you to attempt to ride that mule. I can not allow you to try it any more; you will get your neck broken.’

“‘Ain’t I alwers done my work, mossy?’ asked Meshach.

“‘Yes.’

“‘Well, I’se worked fur you un your fader, my ole mossy, now gwine on ter thirty year, un all I axes is—jes’ lemme break dat mule.’

“‘But I am afraid she’ll break your neck, Meshach.’

“‘Ain’t gwine ter do no sich er thing, sah.’ The old fellow was much excited, and did not take pains to be as polite as usual. ‘Den ef you risks your nigger, I risks my life.’

“‘Go ahead, then,’ said father. ‘If you are determined to try to break her, I know that you will have your way; and if I do not let you do it now, you will take some occasion when I am not by.’

“‘Ef I kin jes’ git er good holt on to er once,’ said Meshach, ‘I boun’ she nebber throw me off her back uggin.’

“The same incident happened again; Meshach sprang on her back and was immediately thrown over her head. He jumped up without seeming to be hurt.

“‘I tell you how it is, mossy,’ he said, deprecatingly, ‘no marter how tight you clinches your legs to er side she jes’ rucks up her skin, un off you goes. Jes’ wait erwhile tell I gits er piece er rope, den you sees.’

“He went into the tool-shop, which stands in a corner of the back yard, got two pieces of rope, made two loops in one of them, and attempted to fasten it around the body of the mule in such a way that the loops would be convenient to put his feet through on mounting her; the mule resisted so much, however, that he found it impossible to do so. She was then taken into the stable, where, as she was confined by the bars dividing the stalls, the rope was at length with difficulty

made fast around her body. On her being brought out again, Meshach immediately jumped upon her back and thrust his feet through the loops. It was in vain that the animal kept throwing up her hind feet; he had a 'holt,' as he called it; and, in the very act of her doing so, he laid the other rope, which he still held in his hand, across her back in front of him, and, drawing the ends of it around his feet, tied them together before him in such a way that it was impossible to be thrown without one of the ropes breaking.

"Run inter de house dere," he said to the boy who had bridled the mule, "un bring me er cowhide."

The whip was soon brought, and with some difficulty, amid the wild efforts of the animal, that seemed at length aware of the hardihood of the adversary whom she had undertaken to conquer, was placed in Meshach's hand. He immediately applied it to her sides with unrelenting severity. After two or three violent plunges backward and forward, she started off down the lane with fearful rapidity. Fortunately, the gate was open; and mule and rider disappeared in a moment at the turning into the public road.

"A fleet horse was brought out from the stable, and, at my earnest solicitation, I was mounted on its back and sent in pursuit to keep a watch on Meshach and his animal, and see if they should be in need of any help."

"As I pressed at full speed down the lane and along the public road I could see the impressions made in the sandy ground by the small hoofs of the mule. After I had galloped about half a mile I met Mr. Rollin. You remember the old fox-hunter?"

"I remember him very distinctly," I answered, "in connection with my first jumping a fence on horseback. I was just in the act one morning of mounting Black Charley—that wild and slenderly-built colt which I used to ride, you know—when I heard fox-hunting sounds in the fields below here toward the river. I immediately galloped toward the noise, and overtook Mr. Rollin just as he was about to breast a ten-rail fence. He threw the rider, or top-rail, off with his right foot as his horse was in the act of going over the fence. I

suppose that I shall not soon forget my admiration of his expertness, and also my pleasure at the emphasis with which he said ‘Well done, youngster!’ when Black Charley took me over almost by his side without any volition of my own. I was then but twelve years old, you recollect. It seemed at the moment as if the bound were tearing my body into fragments; but my alarm was over with the danger, and I enjoyed the chase very much. Though Mr. Rollin was first ‘in at the death’ of the fox, he insisted upon my accepting the brush. But I am interrupting your story; please go on.”

“Well, I met Mr. Rollin standing in the middle of the road holding his riding hack by the bridle-rein. Both horse and rider were covered with sand and dust, and the former was trembling in every limb, and had a wild, scared look in his eyes.

“‘Good-morning, Mr. Rollin,’ I said. ‘Did you see a negro man go by here mounted on a mule?’

“‘What a question to ask!’ he exclaimed, with considerable excitement. ‘Don’t you see the hoof-prints all along the road? He came fast enough to make them deep, I am sure. He and that infernal animal which he rode—and which looked as if it might be the devil in a mule’s form—rushed against my nag and myself just now, and upset us before I had any idea of the state of things. It wouldn’t have happened if I had been mounted on one of my hunters. What in the thunder did you have the negro tied to such a devil of an animal for?’

“‘He tied himself,’ I answered, ‘to prevent being thrown. I have no time for farther explanations; I must follow on to try to prevent any harm from happening.’

“‘I will go with you,’ said Mr. Rollin, springing on his horse.

“We had not ridden far when we found an ox-cart, freighted with a hogshead of tobacco, in a clump of trees on the roadside. One of the wheels was hooked against a stump, and the ‘yoke’ of oxen fastened to the tongue of the cart were tangled in among the saplings. The leading yoke or pair of oxen had broken loose from the cart, and were standing at a little distance, fastened together by the yoke across

their necks. The driver, a negro boy of eighteen or twenty years of age, was swearing at an awful rate at the oxen which were attached to the cart, and using his large horsewhip unmercifully in his efforts to get his team back again into the road.

“‘Dat you, Marse Wat?’ he said. ‘Wunner what de debbil’s de marter wid Uncle Meshach. He come ullong de road here jes’ now, tied onter er crazy mule, gwine ullong same us ef de debbil was arter him, scared my oxen inter de trees here, un, cos we didden git out er de way soon unnuf, de mule jump ober de hind part er de cart, un scratch husse’f, un den tuck off through de corn-field dare jes’ like er streak.’

“Mr. Rollin and myself followed the way that the mule had taken through the field, which was made plain enough, not only by the hoof-tracks, but by the damage done to the half-grown corn, till we came to a fence, where we found that animal, with Meshach still fastened to her back, lying across the top log of one of the panels, with her fore legs on one side and her hind legs on the other. It was evident that she had tried to jump the fence, and had only been half successful. She seemed to have tired herself out with efforts to release herself, for she was quiet enough now. Meshach was working at the rope before him, and did not at first notice our approach. A hearty laugh from my companion and myself drew his attention. He ‘fired up’ at once at being made the subject of ridicule.

“‘See here, young mossy,’ he said, ‘did you nebber see er nigger on er mule before?’

“‘Yes, uncle,’ I replied, ‘but, I am sure, never in such a position.—It is difficult to tell, Mr. Rollin,’ I continued, turning to that gentleman, ‘whether Uncle Meshach or the mule is conqueror. I suppose it may be considered a drawn battle, since the mule did not tie Uncle Meshach to her back, and he did not lay her across the fence.’

“‘I should call Meshach the conqueror,’ said Mr. Rollin, ‘since he is uppermost; but if you wish to save your mule, Walter, you had better relieve her from her present situation as soon as possible.’

"‘Dat’s jes’ what I think, mossy,’ said Meshach. ‘Dis rope’s got into er hard knot, un I can’t git at it wid my teef. Lemme your knife, young mossy, un I’ll cut it in two.’

“Meshach was soon relieved from his unpleasant position. The mule made one or two efforts to release herself from her disagreeable predicament, and again relapsed into quietness.

“‘I’ve brung her down any how,’ said Meshach.

“‘On the contrary,’ I remarked, ‘she is certainly in a higher position now than she was when you undertook to break her this morning.’

“Looker here, you young Mass Wat,’ said the irascible old negro, ‘ef you don’t lemme ullone, I tell ole mossy on you jes’ us soon us eber I gits home.’

“It was wrong to irritate him, but it was also impossible to avoid laughing again. I soothed him, however, by affecting alarm at his threat, and promising that, if he would not tell father, I would not laugh at him any more. By pulling down the fence we enabled the mule again to stand on her feet. She was completely subdued, allowing Meshach to mount her without any difficulty, and quietly trotted home. She was always so timid afterward, however, and so liable to start at any unusual object or sound, that she was not fit for the saddle, and, indeed, injured for any work.”

CHAPTER XVII.

THE OLD FOX-HUNTER.

Singular Notions of his.—Strange Stories told of him.—The Doctrine of the Metempsychosis.

“It appears to me,” I said, after Cousin Walter had concluded the account of Meshach and the mule, “that I have a dim recollection of having heard of Mr. Rollin’s death, or at least of his having had a very severe ‘spell’ of illness some years ago.”

“He has been dead for several years,” said Cousin Walter.

"But he will be long remembered and talked of in the neighborhood. He was one of those singular beings who are not easily forgotten by those who have known them."

"In what respect was he singular?" I asked. "All that I remember of him is that he was remarkably fond of fox-hunting."

"It has often occurred to me," said Cousin Walter, "that to those well acquainted with him his excessive fondness for fox-hunting may furnish a key to the other singularities of his character."

"How?"

"Fox-hunting seemed to be his almost sole enjoyment; he began to use his pack earlier and left off later in the season than any one else. And at those times of the year when he could not hunt he would frequently wander whole days among his hunting haunts. Thus much of his time was passed alone with nature in her deepest solitudes. Such a life is calculated to nurse wild and visionary fancies, and Mr. Rollins indulged some strange speculations. He could scarcely be said to be absolutely a believer in any of them; they accorded with his dream-life, but were contradicted by his actual life. He believed, he said, in the possibility and even in the probability of ghost-seeing, but put no faith in any of the ghost-stories current in the neighborhood."

"Excuse my interrupting you. I should like you to tell me some of these ghost-stories before I leave Chittering Neck."

"I take but little interest in such matters," answered Cousin Walter. "The negroes always have a plenty of such stories on hand, and will accommodate you at an instant's warning with much pleasure. I would advise you to apply, however, in preference, to Mr. Travers, the principal of St. Joseph's Academy. He is not a believer in ghosts, I think, but has some pet theory which causes him to make a note of all, or at least the principal cases of ghost-seeing which have occurred since he came into the neighborhood. We shall probably meet him at Mrs. Wilton's; if so, you will, of course, become acquainted with him. At any rate, we can call on him the first time we go to St. Joe's. He keeps bachelor's

hall at the academy, which is a short distance from that village."

"Thank you; I shall be glad to become acquainted with him. But my interruption of your account of Mr. Rollin was only intended by way of parenthesis. Please proceed with it."

"Some strange stories are told of Mr. Rollin. The negroes and the uneducated of the lower white class looked upon him with some degree of awe. 'Tis said that he predicted the day of the death of a young lady, his favorite niece, and the very hour of his own death."

"Were there any grounds for such a report concerning him?"

"Some little, I believe; at any rate, he told father the July before his death that he should die the following September, and his death occurred in that month."

"His common sense," I remarked, "might have predicted that from what he knew of the state of his health without any supernatural aid."

"Very true," said Cousin Walter. "Although Mr. Rollin professed a faith in the Christian religion, he allowed his imagination to run wild in the fields of psychological speculation. He seemed rather constant in a belief in the theory of the metempsychosis, and endeavored, by a specious system of reasoning, to dovetail it into the doctrines of Christianity. I suppose that the ingenuity which he had observed in foxes during his hunting expeditions had originated these views in his mind. I have often heard him declare that foxes have more intelligence than many people whom he knew."

"Idiots, for instance," I interposed.

Cousin Walter smiled, and proceeded: "By the way, Clarence, I have a copy which I made of a paper written by him about a fox that, many years ago, was a subject of much interest to the hunters of Chittering Neck. I have heard Mr. Rollin say more than once that he did not know whether the most singular part of his narrative was an actual occurrence or a dream."

"I should like to read the paper," I observed.

"Here it is, at your service whenever you wish to read it," he said, opening a drawer and pointing to where the manuscript lay. "You will observe from the note at the beginning—with the contents of which I have already acquainted you—and from that at its close, that I had at one time, after the death of the author, intended it for publication. I have also taken the liberty of using fictitious names instead of the real ones mentioned in the opening part of the narrative, and of substituting 'A Fantasy' for the last part of the title, instead of 'A Tale of the Metempsychosis,' as originally written. I consider the former better calculated to indicate the character of the composition."

"How did you get an opportunity of copying the production?"

"Mr. Rollin lent it to father to read, and I used the chance afforded. He was more intimate with father, I think, and talked more freely with him than with any one else."

I did not read the manuscript until several days had passed, but introduce it here as in the most suitable place. It is not inappropriate in this work, since it exhibits the influence produced upon a man well educated and of a literary tendency by a life in such secluded portions of the country as the country referred to. Any one who visits the more retired parts of Southern Maryland, or, indeed, of any of the Southern States, may find a number of such persons as Mr. Rollin—at least in the respect to which I now refer—by a close observation of the characters of those with whom he meets.

The introductory note spoken of by Cousin Walter is omitted, since the information contained in it is already given in the preceding conversation.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BLUE NOSE; OR, THE FOX'S VISIT.—A FANTASY.

The sly Reynard.—A singular Book.—Dream-land.—The Fox makes a friendly Call.—He discourses of his Transmigrations.—An American Politician.—The Fox politely takes his leave.—Sly Reynard trapped at last.

I HAD passed the morning since early dawn with Dempster, Ferguson, Walwood, and others of my neighbors in one of the most stirring fox-hunts in which I have ever been engaged. We had received information the day before that a large old gray fox, which had made his appearance in the neighborhood early in the season, and had since that time defied the efforts to catch him of our best fox-hunters, had taken lodgment somewhere near the head of Morton's Cove, whence he nightly made predatory excursions against the poultry-yards. These excursions were invariably distinguished by great slaughter among the chickens and turkeys. On this account the fox-hunters, many of whom had been losers by his exploits, were particularly anxious to be in at his death. The many exertions made to accomplish this desirable object, and their constant failure, had made Reynard notorious; and for the purpose of distinction he had received the name of Blue Nose, derived from the bluish gray color of the fur upon his face. He possessed altogether, indeed, a remarkable physiognomy for a fox. The eye of his species is always expressive of cunning; but once during the hunt, as he passed quite near to me, I thought that I observed in Blue Nose's organs of vision a very extraordinary expression of sagacity; indeed, there seemed to be a sort of leer upon his face, conveying the idea of contempt and ridicule mingled with anticipated triumph, and whose meaning expressed in language would be, "I permit the dogs to come near to me occasionally only to make you suppose that you will catch me after all, but I do not feel at all uneasy—you can not do it." This was, perhaps, mere

fancy, caused by the wonderful dexterity with which he doubled, shifted, and put the hounds to rambling, which he frequently did. At length he gave us the last and “capping-the-climax” proof of his skill by setting the dogs perfectly at naught; and all after-exertions to recover the lost scent were perfectly useless.

Notwithstanding the excitement and sport which I had anticipated in the day’s chase, and which were fully realized *malgré* our failure, I should not have joined the hunt had it not been for a previous engagement to do so. I had sat up late the preceding night engaged in reading a work, by a visionary, advocating the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls; and, in spite of the opinion which I would at almost any other time have expressed of the absurdity of the principles supported, the strange and yet beautiful language of the production, together with the wild dreaminess of the speculations which it contained, possessed a fascination for my excitable fancy which I could not resist. The expected exercise of the morning forced me unwillingly to lay the book aside unfinished, in order to take some necessary repose. On the conclusion of the chase—I did not accompany the rest of the party to dinner at Dempster’s, but made an excuse and returned home for the purpose of resuming the perusal of the book.

After a hasty dinner I entered my study, and in a few hours the reading of the work was concluded.

The sun of a clear winter day was setting as I closed the book and placed it on the table beside me. The wood-fire burned low on the hearth, and as the twilight deepened it shed a wild shadowy glow through the apartment. I did not ring for lights, as that soft, dreamy, yet fitful lustre suited better the state of my mind. There I sat with my gaze fixed upon the ever-changing light of the red coals, musing of the volume which I had just read; yet with these musings the idea of the old gray fox seemed inseparably connected, and his cunning, intelligent eyes were constantly looking into mine from the glowing hearth. Both subjects, the volume and the fox, had in truth taken strong hold of my imagination; so much so,

indeed, that, had the effort been made, I believe I should have found it impossible to get rid of either of them. The exertion was actually made in the case of the fox; but I found it as difficult to dismiss him in fancy as to catch him in fact. "An obstinate old Blue Nose!" I said to myself; "and, if there is any truth in the Pythagorean theory of the metempsychosis, the body of that fox imprisons a spirit that once animated the frame of the most cunning, cheating old curmudgeon of a man that ever existed."

How long I had remained in this dreamy state of mind I can not tell, when the door of the room quietly opened, and there, sitting upon the threshold, was the owner of the eyes that had stared at me from the hearth, and which still wore the same air of mingled cunning and triumph; there was also an expression which seemed to ask permission to come farther. The animal's presence there was certainly very wonderful, and yet it did not appear to me so strange at the time; and so much had my mind been occupied, involuntarily, indeed, by the idea of the old scamp, that scarcely more effect seemed to be produced upon my faculties by the actual existence than had been already produced by the mental image in the fire. I almost felt, indeed, as if I considered his presence, and in that exact position too, as a matter of course. In answer, therefore, to the expression of his countenance, which asked permission to enter, I at once nodded my head consentingly. He came in with a soft, easy footstep, and moved toward the table, his eyes still bent upon mine. He seemed to have another request to make, and looked toward the table; the required nod was given, and in an instant he was upon it. All his movements were made without the slightest noise. He placed his fore paws upon the book which I had been reading, pressed open the cover, and began to turn over the leaves, eyeing them all the time very intently, like one searching for a particular passage.

"Good!" thought I, with an inward laugh; "what will my companions of to-day say when I tell them of this?"

The affair bore to me, in fact, the appearance of a pleasant adventure, the strangeness of which only added to the pleas-

urable sensation which it created, blended considerably as it was with a not disagreeable idea of the ridiculous, occasioned by the vision of certain human faces brought up before my mind's eye by the apparently not altogether affected gravity and interest expressed in the countenance of Blue Nose, the fox, as he pored over the pages.

He seemed at length to find the passage of which he was in search, and, placing one of his paws upon it, turned his eyes toward mine with a look which I very easily construed into a request that I would read. It read as follows:

"The beasts or birds, in whose bodies abide for the time the spirits that can not die, appear in many instances to be aware of their former existence, and to strive by various actions to inform us of their knowledge."

I looked at Blue Nose. He tapped his forehead with his paw, and at the same time nodded his head, as if to say, "I am aware of my former existence, and wish you to know it."

"So," thought I, as I replaced the volume, "the author of this strange work is likely, after all, to prove a great philosopher, instead of a mere dreamer, as I supposed." But what was certainly extremely remarkable is that the wonderful circumstances which were transpiring under my very eyes did not affect me more than any other exciting occurrence, which had no touch of the supernatural, would have done; nor was my opinion of the doctrines advocated in the book otherwise influenced than it would have been by an unanswerable and convincing argument in their favor drawn from the observation of natural phenomena.

Blue Nose had resumed his examination of the volume, and at length called my attention, as before, to another passage, which, though it appeared strange to me that it should have done so, had entirely escaped my notice when I perused the book. By the way, on subsequent examination, I can not find it again. It was to the following purport:

"The curse of non-communication through the medium of language with their former associates, which is laid upon transmigrated spirits because of the sins committed by them in human bodies, may be for a time removed, it is said, by the

following means. I have never had an opportunity for testing its efficacy. Indeed, the concurrence of circumstances necessary to its trial with a prospect of success is not likely to occur once in a hundred years.

[Two leaves of the manuscript are here wanting, the exact amount being indicated by the numbering of the pages. It is certainly a "*hiatus maxime deflendus*," since it is apparent from what precedes and follows that the most interesting portion of the narrative is lost.—W. W.]

"You listen," said the fox, with the most ludicrous assumption of dignified gravity, "to the discourses of an intelligence that has animated statesmen, warriors, and monarchs. The time allowed me to address you in the language of men will not admit even a list of these. But enough has been done by me already to convince you of the truth of the Pythagorean doctrines, and you must write that which you have seen concerning me, and also that which you shall hear from me, in order that another proof, which the future has to perfect, may cause those who shall hereafter read these words to believe.

"All of those to whom my spirit has given existence were remarkable for never hesitating in using any means to achieve their own ends, however monstrous in a moral point of view those means or ends might be, so that they were safe and available. Those whom they had any cause whatever to dislike, whether that cause was hidden in their own bosoms or was known to others, generally withered in fortune or reputation, and sometimes in both; and none could say whence came the wind that blighted. In humble life they had great facility in transferring into their own possession the property of others, and much adroitness in shifting the legal and sometimes the apparently moral responsibility from their own shoulders to those of others. In high life they were distinguished as statesmen for managing in council to deprive the enemy of those advantages which he may have obtained in the field; or, as generals, for gaining victories less by hard fight-

ing in the battle than by creating dissatisfaction and mutiny in the camp of the foe; and, both as statesmen and warriors, for always preferring cunning to an open display of power. Though they rendered services to their country, it was ever with some concealed purpose of their own as the true inducement. They were generally successful in their undertakings, yet I must confess that their schemes, however well laid, were sometimes opposed by failure.

"The first character in which I made my debut upon the stage of earthly existence, was that of one of the generals of the Roman Fabius; and to my advice is to be attributed most, if not all, of the discomfitures with which Hannibal met; and could I have bent the foolish integrity of the Roman commander, neither Hannibal nor his army would ever have returned into Africa. Do not imagine that my agency in this instance is to be attributed to patriotism—I scorn the weakness. I had the reward I coveted, an office in the republic, which I had sought in vain till I procured the assistance of Fabius.

"Among the characters well known in history whom I represent, was that king of Pergamus who, being left in charge of the crown by his brother, the former king, as guardian to his son, managed so adroitly as to keep possession of the reins of government during his whole life, with the full consent of the governed; because the rightful heir, being purposely unfitly educated by him, was not qualified to reign. In this instance my plots were perfectly successful. They were not so much so, however, in my representations of Don Rodrigo Calderon in Spanish history, or King Richard the Third in that of England. With the fortunes of both of these you are well acquainted. The schemes of the former were well arranged and well conducted, and should have won for him a better fate; and though the latter also died a violent death, he is one of those of my characters of which I am most proud, since, after all his villainies—as you doubtlessly call his principal actions, but which I consider perfectly justifiable, as he had his own ends to achieve—he fell gloriously in the arms of battle; for, though a coward at

heart, circumstances forced him to fight as if nature had made him a hero. By-the-by, to settle the question about his deformity, which I believe is still undecided, he *was* a hunch-back. I may add without shame, and, indeed, even with pride, that those whom I represent were seldom remarkable for personal beauty, as a warrior may justly boast of defeating his adversary with imperfect arms.

"My last conspicuous character was one that flourished in the last century—that celebrated diplomatist who had at one time all Europe in his leading-strings. Though, in this instance, my machinations were discovered, the discovery was too late to defeat their ends. Their influence is still felt; and I consider that I have just cause to be proud of this character, and to prize it as one of my most glorious achievements.

"And now for the proof which I promised, and which is not intended for yourself, but for the coming generation.

"The transmigrated spirit, in any other than a human form, knows not only its past existence, but also its future, so far as the next character which it is to support is concerned. My next representation will be that of an American statesman, remarkable for the versatility of his genius and the poverty of his principles; the ease with which he will forget the gratitude due to his friends, and with which he will suit himself to any party which his interest may prompt him to support; the facility with which, in his published writings, he will praise, and afterward tear to pieces, the character of the same individual—all to answer his own selfish purposes. But to give him the last and most distinguishing mark, one that will not admit of a doubt as to his identity, look at the countenance, if so it may be called, before you. As nearly as a human face can resemble that of a brute, will his resemble that which I now possess; so much so that, should you live to see him, you will at once recognize him by the resemblance. Cunning, which it must be acknowledged is the predominant characteristic of this visage, will be no less the distinguishing expression of his mind than of his face. He will, indeed, be a character after my own heart. Yet, after all, since his

name is known to me, I may as well inform you of it: —————

“With regard to my present situation—if you and your friends feel any inclination to chase me with hounds again, you are perfectly welcome to do so. It is a matter of not the slightest importance to me. Upon reflection, it may be of some advantage to me that you should do so, as it will bring my powers occasionally into active operation. I suppose, however, that, after what has occurred between us, *you* will entertain no hope of ever catching me. But ‘*verbum sapienti satis est*,’ you know; and besides, my time is expired.”

As he concluded his harangue, Blue Nose leaped from the table, and, politely retreating backwards to the door, left the room as noiselessly as he had entered it, the door closing softly after him. I again fell into a fit of musing, occasioned by the extraordinary incidents of his presence, and its wonderful accompanying circumstances. From this reverie I was aroused by the entrance of my better half, who came to see what had become of me, as the hour was late.

Though these occurrences are so strange that I am almost led to consider them as the creations of slumber, they impressed my mind with all the force and vividness of real incidents. Were they such, or were they not? *I can not tell.*

P.S. (Dated a day or two later.) I have just been informed that Blue Nose met his death last night. Instead of dying after a bold, exciting, and long-contested chase, with the music of hounds and horns and the shouts of huntsmen sounding in his ears, he perished miserably, alone and at night, in an old worn-out trap, captured in the mean and contemptible act of robbing a hen-roost. “*Sic transit gloria!*” His fate is a warning to foxes, whether brute or human.

Note by W. W.

Here ended this extraordinary manuscript. The reader will observe that I have left a blank for the name of the individual spoken of in the conclusion of the fox’s narrative. I have done so because it is really the name of a well-known politician of our country, and for the additional reason that,

as he who bears it is remarkable, as indicated, for changing sides, he may be induced by this intimation to support *our* party in the next political campaign. If he do not, let him look to himself.

CHAPTER XIX.

FAIRVIEW.

Negro Nick-names.—A Welcome.—Old and new Acquaintances again.—Old Coals re-kindled.—Characters.—'Possum sustains the Family Grandeur.

It was between four and five o'clock when Cousin Walter and I set out for Mrs. Wilton's, accompanied by 'Possum mounted on Pacolet.

"Crowley generally accompanies me on such occasions," observed Cousin Walter; "but 'Possum begged so hard to be allowed to go and to ride Pacolet that I was obliged to consent to both of his requests in order to get rid of his solicitations. He must take care, however," he added, loudly enough for the boy to hear, "that he does not play any pranks with the pony. Pacolet, Clarence, is Lucy's own riding nag, and every body's favorite."

"Cousin Walter," I asked, "what is 'Possum's real name?"

"Jack—or rather John."

"He says that he is called 'Possum because he is fond of persimmons, a favorite food, I believe, of the animal after which he is named."

"More likely because he is so sly—given to what the blacks call 'playing 'possum.' But nick-names are so common among the negroes that one is not apt to remember or to think of their origin. Porringer, for instance, has two nick-names, 'Preacher' and 'Fiddler.'"

"Singularly opposite names," I remarked, "for the same person."

"Yes, but very appropriate, too; he has been both preacher and fiddler in his time. Indeed, he sometimes preaches now,

but the name ‘Fiddler’ better applies to him at present. However, as he grows older, his nick-names are more seldom applied to him.”

“‘Porringer’ itself is a very queer name,” I said.

“It is; negroes are fond of queer names. But, as nick-names are so common among them, I am not certain that even ‘Porringer’ is the real name of the important individual of whom we are speaking.”

Thus chatting, we traversed, at an easy canter, the road to Mrs. Wilton’s, which was shaded for almost the whole distance—not more than two or three miles—by thickly-leaved forest trees. The residence of Mrs. Wilton—Fairview—was a large single-story, cottage-like structure, resembling Uncle Weatherby’s in its general features. On dismounting at the horse-rack our horses were immediately taken off to the stable by ‘Possum and a negro boy of Mrs. Wilton’s who was waiting for that purpose.

As we advanced to the house we saw a number of young ladies and gentlemen, some gathered in groups in the piazza and large yard, others promenading under the locust-trees that thickly shaded the latter. Our hostess herself, a stout, healthy-looking lady of some forty-five or fifty years of age, met us at the yard gate, with a hospitable smile on her face, and a hand extended to each.

“I am so glad to see you, Clarence,” she said, with as much frank familiarity as if it had been but eight days instead of as many years since we had met. “But perhaps I ought to apologize for addressing you so familiarly; you are now a law student and more than twenty years old.”

“I hope that you will always call me ‘Clarence,’ Mrs. Wilton,” I answered; “I shall consider it an evidence of friendship and continued good-feeling toward me.”

“That’s right,” she said; “spoken like your old self. But come, you must see some old acquaintances and be introduced to some new ones. Walter, you know every body here and can take care of yourself.”

“Oh! never mind me,” said Cousin Walter; “I shall take the liberty of making myself at home. But allow me to in-

timate, Mrs. Wilton, in a very distant and delicate manner, that you are spoiling that young man; vanity is already his besetting sin."

"As satire is yours, cousin," I retorted.

"I shall never need a subject, Clarence, while you and I keep company."

"You would never need a subject even in solitude, Cousin Walter, were you to study to fulfill the maxim 'Know thyself.'"

"Γνῶθι σεαυτόν," echoed a voice at my elbow.

"Ah! Mr. Travers," said Mrs. Wilton, "you are just in time to prevent a quarrel. This is Mr. Clarence Audley of whom I spoke to you a few moments since; and, Clarence, this is Mr. Travers, principal of St. Joseph's Academy, and a very fine young man, although a Yankee, and rather too fond of quoting Latin."

"Greek in this instance, Mrs. Wilton. I am much obliged for your compliment, but am not a Yankee, however. Do you know, Mr. Audley," he continued, as we shook hands, "that I can not make any body in this neighborhood understand that Yankee-land lies entirely east of the State of New York, and that I, coming from that state, am, therefore, *not* a Yankee."

I had time to do no more than give him a smile expressive of sympathy ere our hostess led me off to present me to her daughters Miss Jane and Miss Maria Wilton, two fair-haired, light-complexioned, blue-eyed young ladies. Miss Jane had a more intelligent look than her sister.

"Jane," said Mrs. Wilton to the elder of them, after we had exchanged cordial greetings, "I hand Clarence over to your charge; make him acquainted with every body."

And so I renewed my acquaintance with the two Misses Sullivan of Port Patience, was introduced to Miss King of Ohio, shook hands with Mr. Lucas, a handsome young lawyer from the county-seat, and Mr. Rollin, a tall, very light-haired, and rather awkward young man, son of the "old fox-hunter," and was made acquainted with several other young ladies and gentlemen. But I did not yet see the person whom I most desired to meet.

"Where is your cousin Lizzie, Miss Jane?" I asked. "I thought that she was here."

"So she is," she answered, looking around. "Let me see. Ah! there she is now, standing by that monthly-rose-bush in the corner of the yard, talking to Mr. Morton."

"He is talking to her rather," I remarked, "and very earnestly too."

"You are right," she said. "Let us go to them."

"Perhaps we should not be right in interrupting them," I suggested, with a smile.

"Oh, you need not fear on Lizzie's account," was the naïve reply; "she will be obliged to us. I am sure that she does not like him at all."

We were saved the venture; at that instant the young lady, who had been standing with her face away from us, turned and advanced in our direction. I was almost dazzled by the first vision of her loveliness. It seemed to me that in truth

"She was a phantom of delight
When first she beamed upon my sight,"

with her large and bright, yet soft and dreamy black eyes, her classically-shaped face, so purely white, without the slightest tinge of the rose, her beautifully-moulded but not too small mouth, which wore at the moment she turned toward us a smile, and her snowy forehead and finely-shaped head, from which the hair parted at the top, and, confined above the temples by a silken band, from the left side of which drooped a single rose-bud with its green leaves, fell in masses of jetty, glossy curls over her neck and shoulders. Her form, rather below the medium height, slight, and exquisitely proportioned, was clad in a neatly-fitting dress of white muslin. She seemed an embodiment of the very ideal of youthful beauty and purity. Though many years have passed since then, so vivid was the impression she made upon me, that I can still realize to some extent the spasm of delight which thrilled every nerve in my system as she frankly placed her soft white hand in mine.

"I am very glad to see you, Mr. Audley," she said. "I

was near calling you 'Clarence'; it seems but yesterday that we were school-mates."

"I wish that you would call me 'Clarence' forever," I responded, clothing a genuine desire in the garb of gallantry. "Those school-days were happy days, Miss Lizzie."

"Very happy," she replied with emphasis and a slight sigh.

That sigh made my pulses throb pleasantly. The perceptions of the heart are often quicker and clearer than those of the intellect.

"But I am forgetting myself," resumed Miss Lizzie. "Let me make you acquainted with Mr. Morton. Mr. Morton, Mr Audley."

The salutations which we exchanged were courteous; in Mr. Morton's, however, there was something of a mocking respect which caused me a pleasurable emotion like that caused by Miss Lizzie's sigh. My heart felt the meaning of that too.

"I believe that I have the honor," he said, "of shaking hands with a poet. I occasionally correspond, in an humble prose way, with the 'Baltimore Visitor'; and I learned incidentally, in a conversation with one of the editors, during a visit which I paid to the office of that weekly last spring, that Mr. Audley is the author of those universally-admired poems signed 'Fitzjames.'"

Though I knew then but little of the world, I *felt* that Mr. Morton, in mentioning that I wrote verses—which he did apparently only for the purpose of placing a sarcastic emphasis on the word "poems"—had made a mistake. Very young ladies admire every body who writes verses. This instinctive feeling gave me confidence and consoled me for the loss of my secret.

"The editor," I said, "had no right to betray a professional secret; and one who has incidentally obtained knowledge of it"—

"Has no right to make it known," interrupted Mr. Morton.

"Shows kindness," I continued, acting upon a moment's impulse, "by making it known under such circumstances. Your approbation, Mr. Morton, sustains my diffidence in pleading 'guilty' to the charge."

"Do you write poetry, Mr. Audley?" exclaimed Miss Lizzie. "I am so glad. You must write something for me."

Improvisation—an unusual thing with me—came fortunately, or perhaps unfortunately, to my aid at the moment.

"It is impossible," I said, "for one who has ever written a line of verse to be in Miss Lizzie Dalton's presence without being inspired. The lines that have come at your call are unworthy their fair subject; but they are true:

"Oft in free hours I think of one, the loveliest of girls,
With a snowy forehead shaded by a mass of raven curls,
And her dark bright eye had seemed perhaps too vividly to flash,
But that its glance was softened by a long and silken lash;
And though her cheek was paler than the palest flower that blows,
Its pearly whiteness well repaid the absence of the rose.

"The spirit in which the piece shall be continued and concluded will depend upon Miss Dalton."

The pale cheeks were made rosy enough by what I had said; at which my own face became flushed, as I was suddenly made aware that, with my usual impetuosity, I had said too much. Mr. Morton had achieved a triumph without any exertion on his part; he could, therefore, afford to act generously.

"Poets are always gallant," he said.

I shook his hand cordially.

Very opportunely for me the announcement of supper came at this moment, although it wanted yet an hour to "sundown." They had and still have the old-fashioned early meal-hours in Chittering Neck. Partly in gratitude to Mr. Morton, and partly because I felt ashamed of myself, I did not interfere with his handing Miss Lizzie into the supper-room, but gave my arm to Miss Jane Wilton.

Mr. Morton was said to be the richest single gentleman in the district. He was somewhat less than six feet in height, slim, and very straight. His hair, of a pale chestnut hue, exhibited here and there slight streaks of gray. His eyes were of a dark gray color, and possessed of a sparkling external kind of brightness. Although his features were angular, and showed here and there in distinctly-traced lines the record of

nearly forty years, he was not by any means a homely man ; neither could he be said to be handsome. His bearing was courteous but tinged with hauteur ; and he seemed never to lose sight of his individuality. His dress was fastidiously neat and elegant. The reader will discover during the course of this work why I am so particular in describing this gentleman.

The talk at the supper-table—which was neatly and profusely spread, as is always the case at the tables of the rich in the county—was general, and frequently enlivened with those light flashes of wit and merriment so common and so becoming to the conversation of the young, gay, and intelligent. We were waited upon by a negro boy and girl, both cleanly dressed in home-made cotton cloth ; their white teeth gleamed and their eyes sparkled at any amusing thing that was said.

When supper was concluded the company again scattered in groups through the piazza and yard ; for the warmth of the evening was more bearable out of doors than in the house, though all the windows were raised, and every door thrown open. Mr. Morton still remained by Miss Lizzie Dalton's side. Cousin Walter had attached himself to the Misses Sullivan. Miss Jane Wilton, Miss King, and myself stood together in a corner of the piazza. I did not like the appearance of this last mentioned young lady. She was a niece of Mrs. Wilton's by the latter's marriage, and had visited the county by her invitation. I felt something very like antipathy toward the fair Ohioan—for fair she was in outward semblance ; but there was something haughty and sarcastic, I thought, in the expression of her features, and she frequently seemed to be meaning something more than she said.

"How do you like Chittering Neck, Miss King ?" I asked.

"I like it very much. Although I am a native of the place, yet our family moved to Ohio when I was at such an early age that I knew nothing of it previously to this visit, except through the descriptions of others, which, indeed, were always so favorable, that I am expressing a high opinion of Chittering Neck when I say that it is 'all my fancy painted' it." (All this was said with a kind of careless expression of

sarcasm—a slight sneer upon the lips). “ You are a native of this part of the county, too, Mr. Audley, are you not ? ”

“ No, miss ; my native home is in a more southern part of it, near the mouth of the river.”

“ By-the-way, Mr. Audley,” said Miss Jane Wilton, “ when did you see your cousin, Mr. Charles Audley, last ? ”

“ I have not seen him since last May; when he visited us in Baltimore. Cousin Walter and I have arranged to spend a night with him when we go to the Methodist camp-meeting to be held in the lower part of the county next week. Cousin Walter says his residence is but a few miles from the camp-ground.”

“ Mr. Charles Audley was here a week or two ago,” added Miss Jane. “ He was speaking of you very highly, he seems much attached to you.”

“ I am glad to hear it. Charley is a very kind, good-hearted fellow ; 'tis a pity that he associates with such people as the Sussexes and that young Wild, who, they say, are leading him into such bad habits as gaming and drinking.”

“ His very good nature and amiability of disposition,” said Miss Jane, “ deprive him of the ability to break off from their influence. I never heard, however, that he either drank or gambled to any extent.”

“ But there is much to fear,” I remarked, “ when one indulges in such habits at all with such companions.”

“ There is no denying that,” she answered.

Our conversation was here interrupted by the sound of negro voices in dispute ; I recognized one of them as 'Possum's. From the corner of the house near which we stood was a line of paling dividing the front yard from the back or kitchen yard. The dispute was going on in the latter.

“ You teched de mare wid de whip now yo'se'f ; I seed you do it. Dat's de reason she flinged me off.”

“ I didden do no sich er thing, now,” said 'Possum's voice. “ Den how come you fur ter undertake ter ride Lady Lightfoot ? What does you know ubabout blooded hosses ? ”

“ I knows jes' us much ubabout um us you does. My missus is got jes' us good hosses us your marster, now. Dare den.”

"What you got fur ter say uggin my marster, sah?" said 'Possum—probably to draw off the quarrel from the original subject.—"What you got fur ter say uggin my marster? Tell me dat. My marster's de onnuble John Weatherby, sah—ben to Congress, sah."

"I ain't got nuffin fur ter say uggin your marster, boy. But my missus is jes' us good us any body's marster. Dare den. We's got more lan' den you, anyhow. Dere's seben hunnerd acres in dis place, un dere ain't but four hunnerd un fifty 'longs ter Ole Delight."

"You furgit, you Dick," retorted 'Possum, "dat we owns Monner" (Manor) "Quarter; dat's six hunnerd at er lick. Den dere's Maltby Hall; dat's three hunnerd more."

I made a movement indicative of an intention to stop the dispute, but both Miss Jane Wilton and Miss King declared their desire to hear the quarrel out.

"What's Monner Quarter?" said Dick, with an expression of much contempt; "'tis too poor ter raise grasshoppers. I hearn Marse Tom Sullivan say dat, as he was er gwine ullong by dere one day, he seed er killdear er settin' on er fence rail, un tryin' fur ter swallow er grabble; un de tears was er rollin' out uv his eyes same us hen eggs. Dare den."

"What was de fence put dere fur den?" retorted 'Possum; "un how did de killdear git strength unnough, libing on grabble stones, ter git so high?"

This poser caused a momentary silence, but the opposite party was by no means disposed to surrender.

"But we's got more niggers den you has," he resumed. "Dere's Aunt Malviner un her six chillun, Pompey, un Susey, un Jake, un —"

"No sich er thing," interrupted 'Possum; "we owns de most servunts. Dere's Uncle Jim, un Uncle Meshach, un Uncle Jack, un Uncle Will, un Aunt Jinny un her five chillun, un Aunt Kate un her seben chillun, un mammy un her four chillun, un little Jim, un —"

Little Jim, by the way, was about six feet high. He had received that name when a boy, to distinguish him from Uncle Jim.

On a full count Dick showed title to three negroes more than his adversary.

"Dat ain't much," said 'Possum, at length, yielding the point. "But we's de olis family any how. We's been in dis county, sah, more'n two hunnerd years, un you don' know your own gran'father."

"I won' take dat," said Dick, and a fight ensued, which I immediately put a stop to. Cousin Walter, hearing the noise, came up and made 'Possum mount Pacolet and go home, promising him a whipping in the morning for his misconduct. I am sure that he never received it.

CHAPTER XX.

COTILLONS AND COURTSHIP.

Porringer in Power.—"The light fantastic Toe."—Love.—Word-skirmishing.—Breaking-up.—Tales of the Supernatural.

SHORTLY afterward Mrs. Dalton joined us.

"Porringer is in the kitchen," she said, "with his fiddle. I feel assured that we are indebted to Walter for this attention. Can not you young people pass one evening in conversation?"

I waited to hear no more. I had been kept away from Miss Lizzie Dalton for the last hour, partly by a sense of shame for what I had last said to her, partly by a feeling of courtesy toward Miss Jane Wilton and Miss King; but the idea of not dancing the first cotillon with her was unbearable. So I dashed away immediately to look for her. I found her in a group with Miss Maria Wilton, Mr. Morton, and Mr. Travers.

"Miss Lizzie," I exclaimed, blushing, and with an apologetic bow to the gentlemen, "we are about to have a dance. Will you honor me with your hand for the first cotillon?"

"With pleasure," she answered, with a beaming smile, which made me feel at ease again.

"Miss Maria," said Mr. Travers immediately, "will you do me the honor?"

A smile and nod expressed a favorable answer.

"I must seek a partner elsewhere, then," said Mr. Morton, moving away.

Three cotillons were soon ready to trip it

"On the light fantastic toe;"

two, of which ours was one, in the piazza; the third in the adjoining parlor. The sable violinist placed himself in the doorway between; he took his position with an amusing effort at dignity, expressive of his full sense of the importance of his services to the amusement about to be entered upon.

It was a glorious evening. A soft and refreshing breeze from the southwest, sweet with the fragrance of the flowers that bloomed around the yard, was stirring among us; and the sun was setting in unclouded magnificence over the broad bosom of the Clearwater, of which we had an unobstructed view from the piazza, when Porringer's fiddle began to strike up, in irresistible strains, "The Long Road to Boston." Twinkling feet soon began to keep time to the measure of the merry music; the clear, ringing laughter of unaffected enjoyment chimed in with the stirring notes, and the eyes of each one flashed more brightly for the pleasure reflected in those of all others. Those joyous old-time tunes, "Old Zip Coon," "The Hog-eye Man," and "Old Potomac" followed, and the cotillon was concluded. My partner had enchanted me by her exquisite dancing, embodying, as it did, the very ideal of perfect grace. The enjoyments of youth, it is usual to say, are mostly based upon delusions; but those delusions, if they are such, how many would be glad at times to recall, and even to make perpetual!

"Is not this delightful, Miss Lizzie?" I exclaimed, as I handed my beautiful partner to a seat.

"It is, indeed," she said, with animation; "and I am glad to see that you enjoy yourself so much. It was scarcely to be expected that one accustomed to the gayeties of the city should find much pleasure in a country dance."

"It is quite the contrary," I answered, "at least with me. I never attend public balls in the city, and can not, of course, express an opinion of them. I think, however, that they would be dull to me. I had some experience, during the last winter, in private dancing-parties; and I am sure that I never enjoyed dancing at any of them as I am enjoying it this evening. In the country we seem to be drawn more nearly together."

"Do you remember," she asked, "the Saturday-afternoon cotillon parties at old Mr. Jack's dancing-school? You were one of the pupils there?"

"I shall never forget them," I answered, with a blush and a bow; "we were often partners in the dance. What has become of old Sam Jack, our dancing-master?"

"His dancing-school is announced, I have been informed, to be reopened for the season in a few weeks. Will you attend his dancing-parties? You have the privilege to do so, as having been a pupil of his."

"I expect to be in Chittering Neck but three or four weeks. If one of them occur during my visit I shall certainly attend it."

Our farther conversation was prevented by the approach of Mr. Morton, who came to claim Miss Lizzie's hand for the cotillon which was about forming. After engaging her hand for the next dance, I hastened to secure, as partner for the present one, Miss Jane Wilton, whom I was so fortunate as to find disengaged.

Time passes fleetly when employed so pleasantly. The second cotillon was soon concluded, and Miss Lizzie Dalton was again my partner.

"I declare," she said, when the third set had broken up, and I was leading her out of the little crowd, "such violent exercise makes one feel the heat of the weather. I shall rest during the next dance."

"There," I said, pointing to a mound around the roots of one of the large trees in the yard, on which the moonlight, having found a passage through the trees, was softly shining, "let us sit there. 'Tis a cool and pleasant seat, and out of the crowd."

“How sweet,” she said, as we approached the seat—

“How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!”

“It is, indeed,” I answered, “a magnificent night. I never felt the loveliness of any night as I do that of this. The stars look down upon us with a tenderness like that of human eyes. There is a sweeter spell in the moonlight and a more soothing gentleness in the voice of the wind murmuring among the leaves than I ever knew before; and the atmosphere around us seems to possess a balminess and fragrance not accounted for by the flowers.”

“See that vessel,” said the young lady, in a gentle and slightly tremulous tone of voice, and pointing to the distant river, “with all her sails spread. How strongly contrasted the lights and shadows about her under the moonlight! She glides so slowly before this light wind that you must look at her for some time to be certain that she moves at all.”

“Yet the soft breeze,” I said, “is bearing her on tranquilly, though slowly, to the sought-for haven. If happiness be sure for the future, the present itself may be well content. It is for you, sweet lady,” I continued, taking her hand—which she did not withdraw—in mine, “to say whether Clarence Audley is to enjoy a perfect contentment now, in anticipation of a perfect happiness to come.”

The hand in mine trembled, slightly returning my pressure, as I thought, and was then suddenly withdrawn as Travers joined us.

“Come, Mr. Audley,” he said, “you must not monopolize our ‘Lily of St. Joseph’s Creek!’ Miss Lizzie, will you dance the next cotillon with me?”

“I had intended to decline dancing the next set,” she answered, “on account of fatigue; but I already feel so much refreshed that I accept your invitation with pleasure.”

It is not very agreeable to be left in a state of doubt, especially on such a point; and I felt at first disposed to be vexed at her acceptance of his proposition. A moment’s reflection, however, convinced me that she was right. To avoid appearing singular—although I felt at the instant in no mood for

dancing—I hastened to offer my hand to Miss King. The cotillons in the piazza were already made up, and we were merely in time to secure a place in that which was forming in the parlor, when the merry tones of the violin struck the joy-inspiring notes of “Fire in the Mountains.” Under the influence of that enlivening music I began to feel that I had more cause to hope than to fear, and soon became as joyous as usual.

When the dance was finished my partner and I joined a group in the yard, composed of Messrs. Travers, Morton, Lucas, Cousin Walter, Miss King, Miss Susan Sullivan, and the Misses Wilton. The gentlemen were standing, the ladies seated, some of them on the mound around the large oak-trees, others on chairs. As they were all fatigued, the conversation was at first languid. The gayety with which the music and the dance had inspired me soon gave way before this dullness; and, feeling in no disposition to talk, I retired a few steps from the party, and, leaning upon the yard railings, looked upon the far-off moon-lit river. While standing thus, trying to give some order to my scattered thoughts, a hand was laid softly on my arm.

“Clarence,” said a sweet voice, in gentle and very low tones, “are you sad or only pensive? You have no cause to be sad on my account.”

“Dearest Lizzie,” I began—

“Hush!” she interrupted me; “they will hear you. Let us join them.”

“I declare,” remarked Travers, as we returned to the company, “this is getting to be very dull; we shall go to sleep presently. See! there is a falling star. Does not this remind you, Mr. Audley, of that beautiful passage in the *Aeneid*:

“Et jam nox humida cælo
Præcipitat; suadentque cadentia sidera somnos?”

“That is to say in English,” I replied,

“And now from heaven descends the dewy night;
And falling stars to slumbers calm invite.”

“Very literally rendered,” observed Travers.

“Can you not get up a love affair or two?” asked Lucas;

"this night is too beautiful to pass without some of us 'falling in love.'

"We call thee hither, entrancing power,
Spirit of love, spirit of bliss !
No hour is thine like the moonlight hour,
And there never was moonlight more sweet than this."

"Why do you not show us an example?" observed Morton, listlessly.

"I might answer," was the rejoinder, "that 'tis manners' (as the negroes say) to be preceded by you, as the elder; but I can give a better, or at any rate a safer answer than one pledging myself, by implication at least, to such a rule in this case—I am already in love."

"I am pleased to hear it on your account," said Morton; "you have one suit to plead, then, at any rate."

"I render thanks for the interest you express in me," replied the young lawyer with some apparent warmth; "but, although your remark may be *suitable*, it can hardly be said to be becoming, considering that I have cases of yours to attend to."

"The gentleman from the county seat—to use the phraseology of legislative bodies—" I interposed, fearful that, if the conversation continued to flow in its present channel, it might lead to something unpleasant, "can not be said to be named '*Lucas a non lucendo*.'"

Mr. Lucas made me a profound bow.

"That is 'the unkindest cut of all,' Mr. Audley," said Miss Jane Wilton, "that you who have been rendering Mr. Travers's Latin quotations into English for us should yourself speak in an unknown tongue."

"Perhaps," suggested Miss King, "Mr. Travers will consent to the exchange of offices that seems to be contemplated by Mr. Audley, and bring *light* out of the darkness of the last quotation."

"Do you understand the Latin, Miss King?" asked Travers, with interest.

"A little," she answered, with a slight blush.

"Come," said Cousin Walter, "if we get to punning we

shall have to bid good-by to peace. Does not Dean Swift say that the wars between Carthage and Rome were called ‘Pun-ic’ because of the pertinacity of the belligerents? Let us try the ‘Virginian Reel;’ there is nothing like music to preserve harmony. See how dissatisfied Porringer looks; he evidently thinks that we are not paying due respect to his musical talents.”

The suggestion was immediately acted upon. Partners were soon chosen, and the dance arranged. The “Virginian Reel” was followed by the “Country (Contra) Dance;” after which the company separated. All the young ladies remained at Fairview; all the gentlemen departed, those who did not reside in the neighborhood accepting invitations to pass the night with those who did. Lucas and Travers accompanied Cousin Walter and myself to Old Delight.

Before we parted I made a whispered engagement with Lizzie to return in the morning to escort her home.

On the way to Uncle Weatherby’s Travers and myself rode abreast, Lucas and Cousin Walter being in advance of us. I made use of the opportunity to refer, in the conversation with my companion on the road, to the ghost-stories of which Cousin Walter had spoken. The result was that he sent to me the next day by Cousin Jack a manuscript of which the following is an exact copy. It is proper that, in introducing it to the reader, I should make some prefatory remarks.

The relation is made in such a spirit that a perusal of the paper can do no injury, and may do benefit to any one who is likely to read this book; the incidents given in it also tend to illustrate, in some respects, the mental condition of certain classes in some, at least, retired parts of the South (perhaps in such places at the North, too, for aught I know) at the time of which I write. Superstition still holds sway to some, though not to its ancient, extent in the particular part of Maryland in which the scenes of this work are located. I am far from entertaining the opinion that either the mental or moral condition of those who believe in the nearness of the spiritual world is unhealthy; such a belief is a check to the impure and a comfort to the pure. A belief, too, so general—

I might almost say universal—as this is (a truth which we all more or less *feel*, and would acknowledge, if we were candid) is deserving surely of more attention than it has heretofore received from psychologists.

CHAPTER XXI.

ST. JOSEPH'S GHOST-STORIES.

Introduction.—Tom Wild's Ghost: seen by Swamp Dick—by Aunt Caroline—by Miss Sally Baker.

St. JOSEPH's is a village of about one hundred and fifty inhabitants, and, like every other place at which I ever sojourned in the southern part of Maryland, is famous for ghosts. The people in that section of the state are, I suppose, as superstitious as any people in Christendom. Living away from great public thoroughfares, the still waters of ancient opinions in their minds, like the inshore shallows of a mighty river, are seldom disturbed by eddies from the grand current of modern progress. With them the supernatural is but little shorn of its pristine power. One remarkable circumstance, nevertheless, shows that in this respect they are somewhat, however slightly, affected by the advance of the age; for whereas, in times of old, ghosts used to appear there invariably in the garmenture of the grave, now they are almost always seen in their ordinary life-time costume.

It is not my intention to write an essay upon the supernatural, or to enter into an argument for or against the possibility of the spirits of the departed appearing to the eyes of those in the flesh. I have only in view to relate a few instances of ghost-seeing in and about St. Joseph's which have occurred since the time, now some two or three years ago, when I became principal of an academy situated near that village—instances that, as the case may be, may furnish amusement to the reader who merely seeks such gratification, or may be used by the studious observer of human nature to

add, though but a little, to the dim light that glimmers upon a mysterious phasis of man's character.

"Mr. Travers," said one of my village pupils to me one morning on the opening of the school, "it is reported in town" (so he called the village of a few dozen houses) "that Swamp Dick saw Tom Wild's ghost last night."

"Indeed!" I exclaimed; "did you hear the particulars?"

"No, sir, except that he saw it at the gate as you come out of town."

This Tom Wild had been, in his life-time, just one of those persons whose ghosts, in the opinion of lovers of the supernatural, are apt to be seen after death. He had been a very dissipated, reckless young man, and, at the time of his decease, was under bail to appear at the next term of the County Court, to stand a trial for shooting his father-in-law, and wounding him so severely that his life was for some time considered to be in danger.

Having business in the village that evening, I took advantage of the occasion to question Swamp Dick about his adventure. This individual, by-the-by, was a slave belonging to a gentleman of St. Joseph's, and had received his singular sobriquet from a previous place of residence.

"Dick," I asked, "did you see Tom Wild's ghost last night?"

"Yas, marster, I did."

"Tell what it looked like, and all about it."

"Yas, sah. You see, Marse Travers, I was er workin' out at de place" (his master's plantation) "all day yisserday; un as I was er comin' ullong home in de ebenin', I stopt at Dan Low's quarter ter hab ullittle talk wid im ubabout er 'possum dat he 'cused me er takin' out er his gum. We had er wery warm talk ubabout it, un Dan said I cussed him (but I didden do no sich er thing), un dat he was er gwine ter hab met urned out er meetin' fur it. I tell you what, Marse Travers, dat Dan Low is de wus nigger in de neighborhood. He's alwus arter quarrellin', he is; he'd druther quarrel den eat any time."

It may be necessary to inform the reader that a gum is a trap for opossums or rabbits, and is so called because it is often made of a section of a hollow gum-tree.

"But, Dick," I said, "you are forgetting the ghost."

"Oh, no, sah. Well, den, you see, marster, Dan un me was er jawin' each other so long dat it was mos' dark when I lef de quarter. You know las' night was er wery dark night, un I felt wery lonesome us I come ullong through de woods, where you could barely see your hand 'fore your face. Den I was er thinkin' what would happen ter me ef dey wus ter hab me turned out er meetin'; un den I 'gun ter think dat maybe 'twasn't right in me, arter all, ter git so mad un ter talk as I did."

"But about the ghost, Dick."

"Comin' to it d'rec'ly, sah. Us I wus er sayin', I wus er thinkin' dat, ef dey wus ter turn me out er meetin', maybe de debbil would git me. I felt wery bad ubabout it all de way I wus er comin' ullong home, un kep' er wishin' dat I could meet wid somebody er gwine inter town. Well, jes' us I got ter de top er de hill, jes' us you come inter town dere, I see er man ullittle way erhead er me, in er big obercoat. I walk fas' fur ter try fur ter ketch up wid him, but I coudden. Den when he got right tudder gate he turn roun' so as I could see his face, un den went straight out er sight same as ef he had sunk right inter de groun'."

"Was that the ghost you saw?"

"Yas, sah."

"How could you see his face, as dark as it was last night?"

"Dun know, marster; but I see his face plain unnough dough, for all dat."

Such was Swamp Dick's vision of Tom Wild's ghost.

A few days afterward the same pupil told me that Tom Wild's ghost had been seen again.

"By whom was it seen this time?" I asked.

"By Aunt Caroline, sir, old Mr. Wild's cook."

Some time afterward, meeting Aunt Caroline, I asked her if what I had heard was true.

"Yas, undeed, sir," she answered; "I seed him jes' as plain as I see you now."

"How did it happen, aunty?"

"Night affore las', sir, jes' ullittle arter daylight down, I thought I hear somebody er talkin' in de back yard, un I step outer de kitchen ter see who 'twas. Un dare I see um plain unnough, standin' talkin' at de back door uv de house."

"Saw them? I thought you had seen but one ghost."

"No, sir; dare was two uv um — Marse Tom un little Josh."

Little Joshua was a brother of Tom Wild's, and had died a short time after him.

"Well, aunty," I asked, "what did the ghosts do? Did they say any thing to you?"

"No, sir; dey jes' look urround at me—dat's all."

"Did you speak to them?"

"Yas, sir; when I see um standin' dare, I say, 'Ah! is dat you?' un den I went back inter de kitchen."

Aunt Caroline seemed to take ghost-seeing as coolly as if it were a very common affair.

"Were the ghosts still standing in the yard," I questioned her again, "when you returned into the kitchen?"

"Yas, sir."

"How were they dressed?"

"Marse Tom hab on dat big obercoat he used ter wear so much. You reckleck dat coat, Marse Travers?"

I nodded "yes."

"Un little Josh hab on de blue yarn suit he used ter wear ter school ebery day."

"Did you see any thing of them afterward?"

"No, sir; neber seed um sence."

A few weeks after Aunt Caroline's vision, old Mr. Wild and his family "moved" out to his farm, at the distance of a few miles from St. Joseph's, leaving their house in the village in the charge of an old maiden lady, Miss Sally Baker. Every room in the house was bereft of its furniture except the one which had been the sitting-room of the family, and which was now used by Miss Sally as parlor, chamber, and kitchen. The house was an old one-story frame structure, consisting of a main building, having a passage and two rooms down stairs,

with the same arrangement above in the roof, and an addition with one room below and one up stairs. The down-stairs room in the addition was the one occupied by the old lady, and was connected with the front room of the main building by a narrow and short entry, beside a wide chimney that supplied a fire-place to each of the rooms united by the entry.

It was on a night in the late autumn or early winter that the following incident, as told to me by the old lady herself, occurred.

She had, according to her custom, retired to bed early, but was still lying wide awake, when she heard the front-passage door (which she had supposed to be locked, and which she found to be so the next morning) open, and some person enter the house. She heard steps slowly advancing along the passage to the door of the front parlor, and then across the parlor to the entry door. She then heard the entry door open, and the steps still continued to advance slowly through the entry. Then the door of her room softly and gradually opened, and she saw a man, dressed in a long dark-gray overcoat and slouched hat, enter her chamber. Her candle had been extinguished, and by the dim fire-light she could not distinctly see his face. Still she could see enough of the figure to cause her to believe the person to be young Jack Wild, who, in his frequent visits to St. Joseph's since the family's removal, had been in the habit of calling to have a half-hour's chat with her. The person advanced to the hearth, and, taking up the fire-tongs, stirred the fragments of the fire into a bright blaze. He then turned around, with his face toward the bed, as if to take a survey of the room. In the vivid fire-light which now illuminated every object in the chamber, she distinctly recognized in the face of her visitor the features of Tom Wild. His eyes, after wandering around the room a while, were at length fixed upon her, and he slowly moved toward the bed. Excessive terror made her motionless and speechless, while the spectre, standing at the bedside, fixed his gloomy eye upon her with a stern gaze.

After looking at her for some moments, it at length spoke. It asked her, in a harsh yet sepulchral voice, what she was

doing there? where was the family? and poured a volume of abuse upon her for being there in possession of their dwelling-place. It seemed to her that it continued talking thus for hours. At length, receiving no answer, it turned away with an expression of stern and wrathful disappointment on its pallid features, and left the room slowly as it had entered, retracing its steps through entry, parlor, and passage, and closing the doors as it passed through them, until she heard the front door shut, and all was again silent.

After the departure of the apparition the old lady lay in a state of half-senseless horror, until the cheerful light of morning shining into the room gave her courage and ability to move.

She averred to me most positively that she was wide awake all the while, and that this account which she gave me of her night's adventure was entirely true. The circumstances are such, however, that the skeptical may believe, with some show of justification, that she saw this vision in the land of dreams. One fact that may, in the opinion of some persons, have a bearing on the case, is that the ghost did not succeed in driving her from the house. She still continued to live there alone.

This is the last vision of Tom Wild's ghost of which I have heard.

CHAPTER XXII.

ST. JOSEPH'S GHOST-STORIES—*Continued.*

The Village Doctor's Ghost-Stories.—The Ghost in the Meadow which the Doctor saw.—The Ghost in the Office which the Doctor felt.

"You know," said Dr. Turner, "that I am not in the least fanciful" (I entertained a quite different opinion, by the way); "and no one can say that I am inclined, either by nature or by education, to be superstitious; yet one or two things have happened to me lately which induce me to think that perhaps Hamlet is not so far out of the way when he says,

"There are more things in heaven and earth * *
Than are dreamt of in philosophy.'"

"Have you any objection, doctor," I asked, "to tell me the one or two things to which you allude? I confess, for my part, that I have always from childhood been fond of hearing tales of the supernatural."

"I have no objection whatever," he answered, "to complying with your request. Two incidents of the kind have occurred to me; and I will tell them in the order in which they happened.

"You have noticed, perhaps, in riding from this village to Jones' Creek Hundred, that, immediately after you pass a small school-house, there is a road which branches off to the right, and, following the side of a worn fence, crosses a rather steep hill?"

"I remember it very well," I said. "It passes a tobacco barn about half way up the hill."

"So it does. Well, after crossing the hill, this road enters the forest, and, after a considerable though gradual descent, emerges upon a small meadow or glade. This meadow is surrounded on all sides by dense woods, and traversed by a narrow and sluggish stream. The road crosses this stream by means of a rude bridge of logs covered with earth.

"I was returning homeward along this road late one night this past spring from visiting a patient. I was fortunately mounted on Blue Dick, a horse that you know—for you rode him once to the county seat—is full of spirit and strength."

"Yes," I remarked, "I have known him to my cost. I very distinctly remember that, during the whole of that ride, there was not one single moment when I was perfectly satisfied that my neck was safe."

"That was because Bob" (his negro boy) "put him in a stiff bit. Manage him rightly with a snaffle, and he is as tractable as you please. But, to proceed with my story:

"It was a dark night; for, though there was a crescent moon in the sky, it was completely hidden from view; the whole heavens being enveloped in thick clouds. I had to trust to my horse's strength of vision to avoid the deep ruts made by cart-wheels and the many fallen branches that strewed the forest road. The wind every now and then sighed mournfully in the trees as I passed.

"Just as I was about entering on the bridge, careering in a swift gallop, my animal suddenly sprang backward with such a violent recoil that it was with difficulty I could keep my seat. Looking forward, as soon as I could recover myself, to learn what had startled him so unusually, I saw a tall figure dressed in a long black robe coming, with a slow, steady motion, out from among the trees to my right, and floating, as it were, over the tall grass of the little meadow, directly across my path. It is impossible to describe to you my horror. Nerved, however, even to recklessness by the terribleness of my situation—alone, at midnight, in a gloomy forest, afar from any other human being, with a horrible spectre, as it seemed, directly in my pathway—I plunged the rowels into my horse's flanks to urge him forward. He attempted at first to resist me; but desperation gave me strength and energy, and I forced him to dash forward, though the dreadful figure glided across the road within a foot of his expanded nostrils as he sprang madly on, roused apparently to phrensy by pain and terror.

"I confess that I was so terrified that I never once turned to look back, and did not slacken rein, but continued to urge Blue Dick with whip and spur, until I arrived at my own door."

"Do you not think, doctor," I remarked, "that the shape which you saw might have been some darker shadow in the woods, and that your approach might have caused it to seem to advance? I remember that I was once made considerably nervous, while riding alone along a forest road at night, by seeing what I thought at first was a tall figure in white coming out from among the trees to intercept me; yet it was only the moonlit trunk of a decayed tree."

"But I was not advancing at the time," he answered; "on the contrary, as I have mentioned, my horse was actually starting backward at the moment. Besides, how can you account for the terror of the horse."

"He probably saw the same shadow that you saw; and your own first glimpses of it may have been at some moment when, in his rearing and plunging, he was making a forward movement; and an excited fancy might do the rest."

"I have often attempted to account for my seeing the figure on some such grounds as you have mentioned, but I must confess that I have had but little success in dimming the vivid impression made on my mind at the time of the occurrence, that it was an actual spectre which I saw."

Feeling that it was not the proper time for shaking the doctor's faith in his having seen a spirit, I called his attention to the second incident which he had promised to relate.

The doctor, who was a bachelor somewhat under thirty years of age, took his meals at an inn in the village, but slept in a large old one-story hip-roofed frame building, standing a hundred yards or so back from the main street, which he rented with several acres adjoining. Only the two front rooms in this house were occupied, the one as an office, the other as a chamber. But one bedstead, which was used by the doctor himself, stood in the chamber; the negro boy who had care of the rooms and waited on the doctor slept upon a pallet on the floor.

"No doubt," said the doctor, "you have heard that this house is haunted?"

"Yes," I answered, "I have heard such a report. Mrs. Clark, the wife of the last tenant before you, said that her family was often disturbed at night by the opening and shutting of doors; yet that, although the house was usually searched upon such occasions from cellar to garret, no suspicious person was ever found. She said also that once, when she was coming from the street toward the house, she saw a female figure in this very room" (we were sitting in the doctor's office) "occupying her 'own peculiar' rocking-chair, but that when she entered the door it was gone. The premises were thoroughly examined, but the figure was never seen afterward. This hearing and seeing of ghosts, as they thought them to be, was, I have been informed, the cause of the Clark family leaving the place. The house was reported to be haunted long before they moved into it, but I have never been able to learn why, though I have often inquired."

"Neither have I succeeded in gathering any information on the subject," observed the doctor. "I have some reason,

however, for believing the report of its being haunted to be true.

"The incident which I am about to relate occurred late in August or early in September last. The weather was very warm. I had been waiting, during the greater part of the day, on a patient who was very dangerously ill of a fever, and did not leave his bedside until late at night, when the crisis of the disease was past, and a favorable change had taken place. It must have been, I think, between twelve and one o'clock when I returned home. The candle had either burned out or been extinguished by Bob. Thinking it not worth while to arouse him, I turned my horse loose in the yard, and took the saddle into the house on my arm.

"I had no difficulty in gaining an entrance, as the door was on the latch. I locked it when I had entered, and, being very much fatigued, determined not to lose time by hunting for the match-box to strike a light, but to slip off my clothes and jump into bed at once. It was a clear starlight night, and there was enough light in the room to show objects very dimly. After taking off my coat, I went to the bed for the purpose of turning down the covering and adjusting the pillows. In doing this I found that it was already occupied. I was not in the least surprised or even uneasy at this discovery, for I felt certain that the tenant of the bed was Roger Morton, who, when benighted in the village, is often in the habit of thus taking possession of my couch in my absence. When, however, after undressing, I sprang into bed, I was very much amazed, and, to own the truth, a little frightened, at finding myself its only occupant. I immediately awakened Bob, who soon lighted a candle; but no one was in the room except us two, nor was any person found, although we strictly examined every room and closet, and thoroughly scrutinized every place that seemed at all capable of affording concealment."

"Did it never occur to you," I asked, "that it was Bob himself who was in the bed?"

"No, and for a very good reason, though the fellow is not at all incapable of such a trick. I heard him snoring all the while on the floor."

The doctor made this declaration with an air and emphasis of such positive assurance that there was nothing more to be said to him in regard to my suspicion of Bob. But the reader and myself, nevertheless, knowing that the doctor's impression that the boy was sleeping on the floor would cause him to believe that the snoring came from that direction, whether it actually did or not, may enjoy the privilege of having our opinion of the matter.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ST. JOSEPH'S GHOST-STORIES—*Continued.*

The Ghost-seer, or the Man that was born with a Caul.—Conversation with him.—The meddlesome Ghost.—The Ghosts on the Bridge.

It is a very common superstition that one who was born with a caul is endowed with the faculty of seeing ghosts. With others a supernatural vision is an extraordinary occurrence, but with persons of this kind it is an every-day affair. An individual belonging to this class resides in St. Joseph's. His name is Dean. He is a small thin man, aged about forty years, with light hair, sharp features, and sallow complexion; and, although active and vigorous, he has always an expression of ill health. Generally speaking, he is considered to be a man of veracity; there are some, nevertheless, who are skeptical in regard to his ghost-stories. Having heard his mysterious peculiarity frequently spoken of, I made use of an opportunity which offered itself to have some conversation with him on the subject.

"They tell me, Mr. Dean," I said, "that you can see spirits; is it so?"

"Oh yes," he answered, "I can see them as well as I can see men."

"Do you see them often?"

"Very frequently; sometimes a great many together, sometimes only one or two at a time; that is, I see them, as I see men, when I happen to meet them."

"How do they appear?"

"Pretty much as living persons, only they seem a little dimmer, as it were; or, rather, they have a kind of misty appearance."

"How do you distinguish spirits from men?"

"There is something strange about them which I do not know how to describe. Besides, as I have mentioned, they do not look so substantial."

"Are they dressed in grave-clothes?"

"Very seldom. They are generally dressed in such clothes as living people usually wear. I have often seen the spirits of persons who were known to me in their life-time, and they almost always had on some dress which I had seen them wear when alive."

"They tell me that you sometimes see spirits in the shapes of different animals."

"I see them so very often."

"How do you know when you see them that they are not living animals?"

"Very easily. Now a dog, you know, has to climb a fence, or to go around a house or a tree; but when you see something in the shape of that animal walk right through such things, just as if they were not in its way, you may take it for granted that you are not looking at a natural dog. And this reason also applies to ghosts in human form, as the reasons before mentioned in speaking of these last also apply to spirits in the forms of animals. I once saw a ghost on horseback. It was the spirit of old Colonel Gay. I saw him crossing a field at a little distance mounted on a black horse."

"Do the spirits ever speak to you?"

"Sometimes; but generally they seem to take no notice of me."

"Will you do me the favor to relate to me some particular instances of your ghost-seeing experience?"

"Certainly. I will tell you a couple of cases of the kind that do not rest for proof entirely on my own word."

"Some two or three years ago I was overseer on Mr. Roger Morton's plantation, which, you know, is on the river, and

some five or six miles from St. Joseph's. The overseer's house on that place has the character of being haunted ; but it was some weeks after we had moved into it before we had any reason for knowing that it had a good right to such a character. The house is a small single-story one, having but two rooms down stairs and one above. The front room down stairs was used as a parlor and sitting-room ; the back room was our bed-chamber ; and the up-stairs room was occupied, at the time I am speaking of, by an aunt of mine who was on a visit to us. The house had no passage ; and each of the down-stairs rooms had a door opening into the yard. A small log-hut that stood a few feet from the dwelling was used as a kitchen.

"We were eating supper in the sitting-room one winter evening, about a month after we had taken possession of the house, when the outer door, which was on the latch, opened to the distance of a foot or so, and remained in that position, as if held there by the hand of some person on the outside. As a cold bitter wind was blowing directly into the door, I requested the person whom I supposed to be there to come in quickly. No notice being taken of my invitation, I left the table and went to the door. An elderly woman in a coarse dress was standing there whom I knew at once to be a spirit. I immediately shut the door and returned to the table, saying to the women folks, in order to prevent them from being frightened, that it was only the wind, and that the door had been kept from blowing wide open by a piece of chip which was lying on the floor. I had scarcely taken my seat when the door opened again in the same manner. This time, when I closed it, I placed a chair against it. But it made not the least difference; almost before I gained my seat the door opened a third time. The women folks were now somewhat alarmed.

"'My dear,' exclaimed my wife, 'is it—'

"'Never mind,' I said, 'do not be scared, ladies; there is nothing to hurt you. Keep your seats; I will soon make it stay shut.'

"When I went to the door to close it a third time, feeling considerably aggravated, I said to the spirit-woman, who was

still there, ‘What are you doing this for? If you want to come in why don’t you do so? If you don’t want to come in, why don’t you let the door alone?’

“I spoke these words in a low voice to keep the ladies from hearing me; but the table was so near to the door, on account of the smallness of the room, that they heard me speak, though they didn’t know what I said.

“My wife was as white as a sheet, but didn’t say any thing; she told me afterward that she knew what it was, though she didn’t see it.

“‘Oh, Ben!’ said my aunt, ‘what is the matter? Who is it you’re talking to?’

“‘Pshaw, nonsense,’ I answered, ‘I was only grumbling a little to myself. ’Tis nothing but the wind.’

“And I laughed at her for being so easily scared.

“In about five minutes afterward we heard a great rumpus up stairs, as if one were very busy pulling out drawers and pushing them in again, raising trunk lids and slamming them down, and then dragging clothes over the floor backward and forward.

“‘Good gracious!’ exclaimed my aunt, jumping up hastily and seizing the candle, ‘that must be your dog, Ben, tearing my things all to pieces. But how did he get there? He must have gone up in the daytime and been asleep ever since.’

“She was rushing up stairs in a great hurry, when, catching a look at my wife’s face, she got scared, and asked me to go with her. Of course I complied. We found all in order in her room, not a thing was out of place.

“The women folks were now dreadfully frightened, and wanted for us all to go over at once to Mr. Morton’s to stay all night. But I objected to this course, and told them that ghosts couldn’t hurt any body; that, though I had seen them very often, they had never done me any harm yet.

“Aunt declared that she wouldn’t stay up stairs by herself again for any thing in the world. I proposed that she should sleep with Mrs. Dean, and that I should occupy her room that night; but my wife wouldn’t consent to my sleeping up stairs. We at last arranged that my wife and aunt should sleep in the

back room, and that I should sit up all night by the front room fire. I don't think the women slept much that night. The ghost kept up its rumpus overhead till midnight; but after that all was quiet.

"My aunt went home next morning.

"I often saw the ghost afterward; but it never disturbed the family any more, except by making some bustle now and then up stairs, but never so loud or so long as on that night.

"You remember," continued the ghost-seer, "that the winter before last three negro men, who were trying to cross the river in a leaky canoe, were obliged to run their boat ashore on the marsh opposite the mouth of George's Creek, and were either drowned or frozen there?"

"I remember," I answered, "that the circumstance which you speak of occurred in the Christmas holidays."

"You are right," he said. "I was at that time still living on Mr. Morton's place, and didn't move my family into St. Joseph's until the second week in the following month. On the day the men were drowned my wife and myself were on a visit to Mother Stanley's" (his mother-in-law) "here in the village. As Mrs. Dean hadn't brought her baby, having left it in the care of our negro cook, we were obliged to return home that night.

"I rode a strong bay horse, with my wife on a pillow behind me. As it was a bright moonlight night, though very cold, and our road lay for the first mile or two through the fields, and then along the smooth gravelly shore of the river, we got along well enough till we reached the bridge across the mouth of George's Creek. There the horse started back at first, and then stood stock still, refusing to budge an inch, though I didn't spare the whip. And no wonder. There were the spirits of the three men who had been drowned sitting on the hand-rail of the bridge. I didn't like to speak for fear of frightening my wife; but, finding that they didn't move, and that my horse wouldn't advance while they were there, I was obliged to do so.

"'Don't you see,' I said to them in expostulating tones, 'that my horse will not cross the bridge while you are there? Why don't you get out of the way and let us pass?'

"They immediately got down from the hand-rail and disappeared under the bridge, which my horse, after some coaxing, consented to cross; and we proceeded homeward, where we arrived without farther adventure."

CHAPTER XXIV.

ST. JOSEPH'S GHOST-STORIES—*Continued.*

Haunted Houses.—The Blue House.—The L House.—The Old Brick House.—The Denouncing Ghost.—The Spectral Reapers.—The Mysterious Wind.

THERE are several houses in St. Joseph's which have the reputation of being haunted. One of these has already been mentioned as containing the office of Dr. Turner. The next house to this toward the south is at the distance of a hundred yards or so, and is the last house in the village on that side. It is a large old hip-roofed frame building, and is called "The Blue House" from the color in which it was originally painted. Standing by itself, surrounded by tall Lombardy poplars, with a flat plain in front of it extending several hundred yards to the bank of the creek, where there is a small grave-yard sheltered by gloomy-looking stunted pines and cedars, it presents a very melancholy appearance. This edifice is held in much awe, though its supernatural claims are rather indefinite. It is said to have been in old times, and by some is still thought to be, haunted by the spirit of a young lady, the daughter of a physician by whose family it was once occupied. This is all that I have been able to learn about the matter. The family who have inhabited the house ever since I came to the county have often declared that they have never seen nor heard there any thing supernatural.

There is a very large two-story frame building situated on an eminence about a mile in a southeast direction from St. Joseph's, and visible from almost every part of the village. It is called "The L House," because of its ground plan having the shape of that letter. Though never entirely finished,

it was at one time quite a fine structure; but having been deserted many years ago on account of its unhealthy locality, it is now falling rapidly to decay. It is said to stand upon a grave-yard; and I can state upon the evidence of my own eyes that two grave-yards are within a stone's throw of it. Of course, in a neighborhood so superstitious as that in and around St. Joseph's, many stories are told of supernatural sights and sounds seen and heard there. When the ramble-loving urchins of the village visit the place to gather fruit from the old and neglected orchard they always go in troops; none of them being so bold as to venture there alone even in the daytime.

I have heard several of the villagers declare that the L House has often been seen brilliantly illuminated at night long after it had ceased to be used as a dwelling; and an intelligent gentlemen, who sojourned at the house for some months when a boy, told me of a noise that he heard there one night, and which he could never account for. His chamber was in the second story, and was separated by only the joists and the laths and plaster of the ceiling from the garret above it. This garret, as intimated, was not floored; yet he was aroused from his sleep one night by a sound as of some one rolling a barrel to and fro above his head, and the noise was continued for some time after he was fully awakened.

The most remarkable in the list of haunted houses is the Old Brick House, which stands in a field at the northern extremity of the village. This house, with four or five hundred adjoining acres, is now the property of J. Stafford, Esq., a gentleman who resides in a neighboring county. It is now, and has been for many years, occupied by his overseer as a dwelling-house. Twenty-five or thirty years ago it belonged to an old captain Macgregor, who made it his residence. The domain then attached to it was much more extensive than at present, comprising some two or three thousand acres. In the division of the captain's estate after his death the mansion, with the land now annexed to it, became the property of Dr. Macgregor, one of his sons, a young man of expensive habits, who died at an early age, having been first obliged to sell the

place to pay his debts. After the sale of the property it was reported that the spirit of Captain Macgregor, whose body was buried in the garden adjoining the house, was often seen at night wandering about the premises, wringing its spectral hands, and lamenting that the estate had passed from the possession of his family.

The following incidents were related to me by an elderly and respectable man, a widower named Speers, who was at the time of their occurrence, and continued to be till his death—which took place a few months ago—the overseer of Mr. Stafford.

At the time—some twelve or fifteen years ago—at which the events detailed in this chapter are dated, the nearest house in the village to the Old Brick House was occupied by Charles Macgregor, a younger son of the captain, as a storehouse for the sale of goods. This individual was very wild and dissolute. Having spent in reckless dissipation nearly all the property inherited from his father, he was persuaded by his friends to try merchandise; but, as he had no business qualifications whatever, the store did not prosper in his hands.

This Charles Macgregor, on one occasion when maddened by drink, violently abused his father's memory, charging him with partiality and injustice in giving to Dr. Macgregor much more than an equal share of the estate. Becoming every-moment more outrageous in his language and demeanor, and phrensiend at length by brandy and passion, he seized an axe, and rushing across the field to the garden attached to the Old Brick House, succeeded, before he could be arrested, in considerably defacing his father's tombstone.

On the night following this unnatural act of drunken ferocity, the spirit of the old captain was seen by some of the negro slaves belonging to the plantation (so they reported to the overseer) standing on his grave, muttering words which they did not understand, and extending its right hand in a threatening attitude, toward Charles Macgregor's store. It was often afterward seen at night in the same place and attitude by the same persons, but not by Mr. Speers.

This vision was made known in the neighborhood very extensively, and it is said had the effect of frightening Charles Macgregor so much that he continued sober for several successive weeks.

The Old Brick House is a large single-story building, having a wide passage and four capacious rooms down stairs, and a passage and four chambers above. The chamber in the southwest corner of the house was the one occupied by Mr. Speers as a sleeping apartment. It has two windows, one in the roof, looking toward the creek, and the other in the gable facing the village. Both village and creek are visible from either window.

One night in mid-summer, either on account of the warmth of the weather, or of some slight indisposition, Mr. Speers could not sleep. After tossing about restlessly on his bed till past midnight, he arose and took a seat at the window, hoping that the enjoyment for a while of the cool and soothing night air might induce slumber.

The night was beautiful. The moon, then at the full, spread here and there a broad sheet of lustre on the creek, made quaint lights and shadows among the buildings of the village and the trees scattered over the landscape, and poured a flood of mild effulgence over the nearly ripened grain around the house.

While sitting at the window admiring the loveliness of the night, Mr. Speers's attention was attracted by a most surprising spectacle. From the grave-yard at the foot of the garden he saw several men, with grain-cradles in their hands, come out one after another and begin to cut down the tall stalks of the wheat. At first they opened a broad path toward Charles Macgregor's store; and as the stately growth continued to fall in wide swaths before the long sweep of their scythes, all that part of the field lying between the house and the village was soon covered with extended rows of the prostrate grain ready for the gatherers. But no gatherers came to bind it into sheaves, and it lay in the pale moonlight where it fell; while still those shadowy reapers plied their tasks with a ceaseless vigor in the beams of the spectral day.

For a while Mr. Speers gazed spell-bound on the extraordinary sight; but as his mind awakened to a perception of his situation, and the conviction grew upon him that he was looking upon a supernatural spectacle, he felt a terror such as he had never before known. His first impulse was to call for succor; but his voice refused to obey his will, and its faint utterance so startled him that he had not the courage to cry out a second time. He could not fly to the presence of the rest of the household without traversing the extensive passage and descending the long flight of steps; and what ghostly visitants might be there? With a desperate effort he shut and bolted the door, closed the window—as if such precautions could keep out the objects of his fear—and sprang into bed. There he lay all the remainder of the miserable night, perspiring at every pore, and peering with dilated eyes into the shadowy corners of the chamber, dreading every moment that some horrid phantom might spring upon him from their dim recesses. The morning seemed to him long in coming, but it at length came; and when the enlivening sunbeams looked in at his window, and he heard the sounds of active life below stairs, he gained after a while sufficient courage to arise and don his dress. When he crept with a lingering fear to the window from which he had seen the mysterious vision, the grain, as he had anticipated, was all standing as on the day before, its slender stalks gracefully bowing their glistening heads, with a low and rustling murmur, to the light breeze of morning.

Mr. Speers, as the reader will suppose, never slept in that room afterward.

Some years ago there stood in the grave-yard mentioned above a weeping-willow, which tradition says was planted by Captain Macgregor himself, and cherished by him during his lifetime with scrupulous care. It was in the first or second spring after Mr. Speers's vision of the reapers, that he was directed by Mr. Stafford to have this tree cut down. The reason, I believe, was that it grew so near to the fence of the little inclosure of tombs as to shade the crops in the adjoining field.

It was a clear, still morning in spring when Mr. Speers sent one of the negro men to the little grave-yard to cut down the tree. The overseer himself sat on the steps of the back door of his dwelling, inhaling the fresh air and listening to the deep strokes of the axe, which resounded at short and regular intervals through the calm atmosphere. All at once the strokes ceased; there was a creaking noise, followed by the sound of something broad rushing rapidly through the air, and of a heavy body coming into violent collision with the ground.

At the moment when the tree fell, and arising as it were from the very commotion of the atmosphere caused by its fall, a whirling and rushing wind entered the house, rattling the window-sashes, and violently opening and slamming to the doors. To and fro, round and round, it swept with a raging vehemence from room to room, strewing with various household articles the floors of the passage and the other apartments.

Mingling with the noise and uproar caused by this singular gale, Mr. Speers heard a voice that seemed to come from the northern parlor situated on that side of the house which fronts the creek. He could not distinguish the words, but the tones were those of indignant remonstrance. He hastened along the passage to the door of the room from which the sounds appeared to issue. There he saw, standing in the centre of the apartment, a man of a tall and commanding figure, upon whose pale, stern features was a mingled expression of indignation and grief. The arms were extended in a threatening manner, and the lips were still uttering words, which either their own nature or the terror of the overseer rendered unintelligible to him. Though the face of the man, or spirit, whichever it was, reminded Mr. Speers of the Macgregor family, yet it was one which he had never before seen. There was something in the whole appearance and expression of the figure which filled him with such dread and horror, that as soon as he saw it, he turned and fled. As he sped along the passage toward the back door, he ran against an aged negro named Will, who in his youth had belonged to Captain Macgregor.

"Good heabens, marster!" exclaimed the old man, seeing the horrified expression of his face, "what's de marter?"

Mr. Speers could only point toward the parlor door, crying "Thiere he is!" and then rushed out of the house. Thither he was soon followed by old Will, whose face wore that extraordinary hue which on the countenance of the negro corresponds to paleness on that of the white man.

When the old slave gained the yard the commotion within the house ceased as suddenly as it had begun; and the only sounds which were heard by the frightened men, except the beating of their own hearts, were the morning songs of the birds, the strokes of the wood-cutter's axe as he lopped off the boughs of the fallen willow, and certain noises in the neighboring kitchen which were suggestive of approaching breakfast.

Old Will had also seen the apparition, and when asked by Mr. Speers who it was, he shook his head gravely and said, "De one dat you think 'tis, sah."

CHAPTER XXV.

ST. JOSEPH'S GHOST-STORIES—*Concluded.*

Death-bed Visions.—The Cases of Mrs. Boyle and Mrs. Somers.—Conclusion.

WHETHER it is true that the spirit, when about to break through the mould of its earthly existence (like a germ bursting from its dark covering into sunshine), has a fore-glimpse of coming realities; or whether the declarations of some persons, when near their departure from this life, that they see visions of the other world, are to be attributed to the nervous character of their diseases, who can tell? All that I can assure the reader of in reference to the two following cases is, that "I tell the tale as 'twas told to me," and that my authority is such that I can not doubt that the statements given of a preternatural kind are those that were made by the inva-

lids themselves. It is proper also to say that, in each of the following cases the disease was of a kind that strongly affects the nervous system.

Mrs. Boyle, a young married lady of St. Joseph's, had been very low for more than a week, and her physicians were surprised that she held out so long. It was on the day before her death that the following conversation took place between her and a married sister-in-law, many years her senior, who was waiting by her bedside.

"Sister Mary," said the patient, on hearing the ringing of the dinner-bell, "why do you not go to your dinner?"

"I am waiting, dear," was the answer, "till Ann" (the speaker's daughter) "has eaten, and can come to stay with you."

"There is no need of your staying, sister; I am not afraid to be alone."

"I am not hungry, Lizzie; and I had rather stay than not."

"But, dear sister, I insist upon your going to dinner. You are wearing yourself out in waiting on me; you hardly ever go to your meals regularly; and I fear that this inattention to yourself will make you sick. Besides I had rather be sometimes by myself; I know that I have to die in a day or two, at most, and I wish to be alone to think on it, and to familiarize my mind with the idea of death, that I may not fear it when it comes."

"Do not talk so, dear Lizzie. Who knows but that you may soon be well again?"

"I shall never be in health upon earth again, sister. I have often felt already as if my body were hardly alive; and at such times I have seen more than once what you will attribute to an imagination excited by the consciousness of approaching death, but what I believe, with a faith that can not be broken, to be no delusion. Sister will you believe me when I assure you that in the last two days I have seen little Joe and Wesley, and Levi Watson?"

Little Joe and Wesley were two sons of the sister-in-law, the former about three, the latter about eight years of age.

They had died some two or three weeks previously within a few days of each other. Levi Watson was a young man who had also recently died in the village.

"Hush, dear," said the sister-in-law, "you must not excite yourself." And she laid her fingers softly upon the patient's arm.

"Ah, sister," said the young invalid, "I see that you do not believe me, but think that fever makes me talk so; yet, indeed, I saw them all. You need feel no uneasiness about little Joe and Wesley; I know that they are in heaven. Little Joe had the same look of gentleness and innocence which made us all love him so; and he looked—Oh! so ineffably happy. Wesley's face, too, was beaming with a bright smile, as he stood holding his little brother by the hand. But Levi seemed sad and pensive; and, when I asked him how he was, he shook his head and sighed."

And so she continued for a long time to speak of the visits of the departed; while all that the sorrowful and pitying sister-in-law could do was to say, "Hush, dear," and "you should not talk so much, Lizzie"—and weep.

The other instance, which occurred some miles from St. Joseph's, is that of a lady whose intellect was of a high order, and whose nervous system was very delicate and sensitive. She was at the time of her death about forty years of age, and had been married to a second husband.

A few days before her death she was lying still, and apparently asleep, while her aged mother was in the room and a young cousin was sitting by her bedside, when suddenly she sprang up and exclaimed,

"Cousin Jane, where is mother?"

"Here she is, dear cousin," was the answer.

The mother was instantly at the bedside.

"What is the matter, dear?" she asked.

"Mother," was the answer of the invalid, "Mr. Sullivan is down stairs in the parlor."

This was the name of her first husband.

"Do not be alarmed, mother," she continued, seeing her mother much startled; "I am not mad. I know that Mr.

Sullivan has been dead many years ; but he is down stairs, nevertheless, and father is with him, though he also, I know, died some years ago. You will see them presently, for they are coming up here."

They tried to quiet her, though they were themselves exceedingly agitated. She became still for a few moments, but soon exclaimed, rising up in bed,

"There are father and Mr. Sullivan now ! Why do you not speak to them ?"

"Lie down, my dear," said the mother, soothingly ; "you will do yourself injury. Lie down, and try to get a little sleep."

"Mother," exclaimed the sick lady, with an expression of strong surprise, "have you lost your eyesight ? Cousin Jane, do you not see them ? Look ! there they are ! Ah, me ! they are going away. You would not speak to them and they are gone."

She was silent a few moments, and then resumed :

"They looked exactly as they did when living here. I tell you, Cousin Jane, that there is much more to be learned of the other life than we are taught to believe. I have heard that some wonderful books have been published on the subject ; and, if I ever recover my health, I will read them if they can be procured."

She recurred to this subject again frequently before her death, expressing at times a strong desire to read the books of which she said that she had heard.

Such are a few of the ghost-stories which are told in and around St. Joseph's. Were I to relate all that I have heard, this article would be expanded to an unreasonable length, and the reader's patience inordinately taxed. He will permit me, however, to make one concluding observation, involving a reflection which very probably has already occurred to his own mind.

Whether the instances of ghost-seeing which I have recorded (and those which the reader may have heard or read elsewhere) are true visions or not ; whether they are the vivid

creations of minds highly excited by terror, or the fictions of a morbid desire for notoriety, one deduction may be drawn from them which is undoubtedly true, *viz.* : The general mind is deeply impressed with a belief in the reality and constant presence of the spiritual world.

CHAPTER XXVI.

HERE AND THERE.

A proposed Fête.—A Ride in the Shade.—Uncle Juniper.—The Invitation.—Passage-at-arms with a Maiden Knight.—A Retreat.

"CLARENCE," said Uncle Weatherby, while we were at breakfast next morning, "I do not think that you were very fond of fishing when a boy—would you like an excursion of that kind now? I have been thinking of sending some of the boys down to the Channels early to-morrow morning to catch crabs for bait, so that we may have some sport before the sun is high."

"Any thing for variety's sake, uncle," I answered; "somebody says that

" 'Variety's the very spice of life,
That gives it all its flavor.'

I must confess, however, that I am rather afraid of the hot sun at this season."

"You forget, my dear," said Aunt Mary, "that Clarence is so affected by heat. Do you not remember his fainting from the heat one warm summer day?"

"He was delicate and liable to fainting when a child," answered uncle, "but he is as 'hearty as a buck' now. Besides there is always some little breeze upon the water, and we need not go if the day is too hot. What do you say to joining in an excursion of the kind with us, Mr. Travers, Mr. Lucas?"

"I am very fond of fishing," answered Lucas, "and you have good fishing, I am told, out on the flats here. I will make one of the party with pleasure."

"And I will go too, for the company's sake," added Travers; "though I can not boast of being a good fisherman. The last time I went fishing I was in company with Mr. Walter Weatherby and Mayhew. The latter seemed to entertain a somewhat contemptuous opinion of my qualifications in the piscatory line, and said that the fish would not bite at my hook because they knew that it was of no use to do so."

"What do you say, father," suggested Cousin Walter, "to sending Will and Meshach down this afternoon with scythes and axes to put the oak grove at the mouth of the creek in order for dancing?"

"A good idea," answered uncle; "we have not had a frolic of the kind there for two years. What is your opinion, Mary?"

"I think it may be made a very pleasant party," said Aunt Mary; "and since the young people will dance even in such warm weather, certainly they can not find a cooler place than in the shade of such high trees and so near the water."

"Then it is settled," said uncle. "Walter you will tell Jim to send the men down early in the afternoon; and make Crowley take one of the horses and ride around to invite every body in the neighborhood. Porringer can take the horse-cart in the morning and load the batteau at the creek landing with all that will be needed for a good dinner. The weir will be certain to yield fish enough; but those who feel so disposed can amuse themselves in the morning with rod and line. After dinner we will have a dance. Do you think, Mary, that you can spare Jinny to go down to cook for us?"

"Certainly," said good Aunt Mary; "and Lucy and myself will go there early in the morning and see that every thing is done in order."

We all expressed pleasure at the arrangement.

"Will it not be delightful, Cousin Clarence?" said Cousin Lucy.

"It will, indeed," I answered, "and especially so to me if my sweet cousin will consent to dance the first cotillon with me."

She looked so artlessly winning that I quite forgot for the

instant that Miss Lizzie Dalton might consider this offer her due.

"I will with pleasure, cousin," she said.

"Father," asked Cousin Jack, who, doubtlessly, from the expression of his face, anticipated fun, "may I go? and will you have the boys there, too? To-morrow is Saturday, you know, and holiday all day."

"I intend," answered uncle, "that it shall be a frolic for every body; of course, you may go. But I hope that Mr. Travers will, nevertheless, hold you responsible for your usual tasks on Monday morning."

"You need feel no uneasiness on that score," said Travers; "Jack never 'misses' his tasks. And we all need occasional relaxation.

"All work and no play
Would make Jack a dull boy."

"Then it is arranged, Mr. Lucas," said uncle, "that you remain with us till our *fête champêtre* comes off?"

"And that Mr. Travers," added aunt, "returns with Jack this evening."

"You only anticipated me, my dear," said uncle.

Mr. Lucas accepted the invitation; Mr. Travers had some business to attend to that night, he would be certain to come over to breakfast in the morning.

"Lucas tells me," said Cousin Walter to me after we had left the breakfast-table, "that there will be a political meeting at St. Joe's this afternoon. Some stump speaking is expected, he says; which means that he certainly will speak. Will you go with us, Clarence?"

"I should like to hear Mr. Lucas make a speech," I answered, hesitatingly; "but I have an engagement this morning which may occupy the whole day."

"What! and I not know any thing about it! There is mystery in this engagement, then."

"No mystery," I answered, blushingly; "I am to go to Mrs. Wilton's to accompany Miss Lizzie Dalton home."

"I understand," he said, with a look of intelligence. "Present my respects to the ladies. And, by-the-by, Clarence,

since you are going to Mrs. Wilton's, you can invite them all to our fete yourself. Be particular not to forget Miss Lizzie?"

He smiled mischievously.

Lady Lightfoot was already at the horse-rack, pawing the ground with impatience; and Porringer was by her side ready to hold the stirrup for me. So I hastened to make my escape. As I sped down the yard Aunt Mary came out on the piazza and called me back to her.

"Clarence," she said, "ask Lizzie to come and stay with us to-night; Lucy and myself will need her taste to aid us in the morning. Tell Mrs. Dalton that we will take good care of her."

The smile upon her face plainly expressed her knowledge that the message would give me pleasure.

"Dear Aunt Mary," I said, with enthusiasm, as I kissed her hand, "how I do love you. You are so good."

She gave me a kind and rather sad smile of intelligence, as if sympathizing with the ardent and hopeful feelings of youth, yet pitying the disappointment to which they were too often doomed. It was such a smile as might have been won from an angel by "my Uncle Toby's" humane profanity.

The morning was fair and cloudless, and a light but refreshing breeze from the southwest tempered the warmth of the atmosphere, as, gaily shaking the bridle-rein, I put the mare into a lively canter down the avenue of ancient cherry-trees that led to the public road. Her free and elastic motion suited well the happy mood of my own spirits. The broad Clearwater spread its silvery wealth afar off below me, and the fair hills beyond its opposite shores looked, in the golden hazy distance, like the "Happy Islands" of our waking dreams. But my happiness was no longer in mere dream-land; it was a waking, living reality. "My bosom's lord," indeed, "sat lightly on his throne." I was troubled with no thought of worldly prudence; the future lay before me as bright as that river, as beautiful as those distant hills. I only dwelt upon the words, "You have no cause to be sad on my account," and the only rational deduction that could be drawn from them, the deduction, so rife with rapture, that she, the mere

thought of whom made my pulse bound with a more earnest throb, who was the life of my life, loved me—"even me."

Thus careering gaily on, my hair—it was the fashion then to wear it long—floating from under the light straw hat in wavy curls to the pleasant breeze, as I turned into the lane that led to Mrs. Wilton's I met an elderly negro man, with a bright cheerful-looking face, mounted on horseback.

"Good-morning, uncle," I said, as I was about to pass him.

"Dat Marse Clarence Audley?" he asked, stopping his animal on the roadside.

"Yes," I answered, as I reined in Lady Lightfoot.

"Why, young marster, don' you know yo' ole acquaintance Juniper?"

"Belonging to Mrs. Dalton on St. Joseph's Creek, I think?" I said.

"Yas, marster."

"How did you know me, uncle? I was a boy when you saw me last."

"Reck'n not, marster—not conterdic'n' you, sah; seed you dancin' wid our Miss Lizzie last night on de piazza at Fairview here. I come ter bring Miss Lizzie's mare fur her ter ride home on; den de mare bruck loose outer de parstyer last night un come home; un den I had ter come back ter bring ur ug-gin dis mornin'."

The reader may suppose that I preferred going on my road; but the old negro seemed so desirous to have a little more chat, and so confident that his wish would be gratified, that I had not the heart to disappoint him.

"Well, Uncle Juniper," I said, "how are you getting along in the world?"

"Fust-rate, marster, alwus fust-rate. I se got one er de best er missusses; my ole woman un chillern's all strong un hearty; we neber has no doctors ter pay, eben ef we is sick; we's sartin uf er good house ober our heads, uf good close, un er plenty er wittles. We ain' got more work ter do den we ken do easy; un den when Sunday comes—bress de Lord!—we ken res' all day long widout er bit er trouble on our min's. Tell you what, young marster, I thinks de niggers has de best of it."

"I declare, Uncle Juniper," I said, "it does me good to hear you talk so. What you say reminds me that Cousin Walter and I used to call you the African Philosopher."

"Feel-hoss-ober, sah?" he asked with a puzzled expression.

"We meant that you are one of those who know what is best for themselves and take the world easy," I replied, laughing, as I gave the rein to my impatient mare.

When I arrived at Mrs. Wilton's I found that all the young ladies, except Lizzie and those of the family, had taken their departure.

"I was afraid," I said, when the young ladies made their appearance in the parlor, "that you would consider me uncivilized for coming so soon, as I left Uncle Weatherby's almost immediately after breakfast; but I find instead that I owe Miss Lizzie an apology for being so late."

Lizzie gave me a smile of welcome, but said nothing.

"As to your being too soon," said Miss Jane, "we should have been happy to have had you to breakfast."

"And as to your being too late," added Miss Maria, like an echo, "Lizzie could not have gone sooner had she wished. Juniper has but just brought back her mare which broke out of the pasture here last night and took herself off home."

I told them of my meeting Juniper on the way; and they all laughed at his "feel-hoss-ober." We were young and light-hearted, you know, and glad to have an excuse for giving voice to our happy spirits.

"You must not laugh at Juniper," pleaded Lizzie; "he is one of the best old negroes that I know; one of your good old-fashioned Methodists. It is true that his prayers are loud and long, but he performs all his duties well, and is kind and obliging to every body."

"And a philosopher, withal," added Miss King, sarcastically. "Had I known that he was so interesting a character he should not have gone away so soon; I should like to have had some talk with him."

"Ladies," I said, "I am commissioned from Old Delight as ambassador *extraordinary* (you generally send negro boys with such messages in Chittering Neck) to beseech you all,

without fail, to honor with your presence a *fête champêtre* in the oak grove at the mouth of Weatherby's Creek, to last all day to-morrow. There will be fishing and rambling in the morning, dinner under the trees, and dancing on the green-sward in the afternoon."

The reader will surmise why I did not mention, in the presence of the rest of the young ladies, the special invitation to Lizzie.

"Oh! that will be delightful," said Miss Maria. "Do you not remember, Jane, the party there two years ago, when we were at home during our school vacation? Lizzie will not forget it, I am sure. She danced so beautifully that they say Mr. Morton fell in love with her though she was only a school-girl."

Lizzie's cheeks and neck were immediately covered by a burning blush.

"It is not right for you to talk so, Maria," she said, "about what people say."

"Maria is such a rattle," observed Miss Jane. "But, indeed, Lizzie, Mr. Morton acts, it seems to me, as if he were in love with you now at any rate."

From the quiet smile on Miss King's face she seemed to be enjoying the scene.

"But, ladies," I interposed, to save Lizzie from farther annoyance, though her cousins had evidently spoken merely from the thoughtless impulse of innocent merriment, "you have not said whether or not you accept my invitation."

"Oh, of course—of course," they said.

"And we must not forget," added Miss King, "to thank Mr. Audley for the graceful manner in which he has performed his commission. Even Crowley, (is that the name of the boy?) with all his practice, could not have acquitted himself better."

I bowed profoundly to Miss King, as I joined in the laugh created at my own expense.

"I avoid the conflict," I said; "a gentleman can not gracefully enter into combat with a lady, even when the weapon chosen is the sword of wit."

"And of course," she replied, "Mr. Audley wishes to do nothing ungraceful. I have heard or read the maxim, however, that 'discretion is the better part of valor.'"

"I think that you have satisfactorily proved, Teresa," said Miss Lizzie Dalton, "that *discretion* is sometimes *better* than *valor*."

And the pale cheeks suddenly became crimson at the action of her own impulse. I owed Miss King a debt of gratitude for provoking this championism.

"*Mutato nomine de te fabula narratur,*" retorted the latter. "In the days of chivalry the sterner sex espoused the cause of distressed damsels; in our days ladies take up the lance in defense of timid gentlemen."

"Oh, Teresa," exclaimed Miss Maria, "I did not expect that of you; it is not fair to quote Latin against Lizzie, who does not understand the language."

The young lady addressed answered only by a smile expressive of the good-humor and self-satisfaction of triumph.

"I was about to request, Miss King," I said, "that you would substitute 'courteous' for 'timid' in your last remark; for, if need be, it will be shown that the spirit of true chivalry is not yet extinct."

"Meaning—in the bosom of Mr. Clarence Audley," she observed.

"In the bosom of every true gentleman," I answered. "But allow me to add that a moment's reflection convinces me that you were right in using the word 'timid'; for who so brave that in a tournament of tongues would not yield the victory to a knight so renowned for valor as Miss Teresa King? Miss Lizzie," I added, turning to that young lady, "I am ready to retreat as soon as you please."

"I accept the victory which you yield," said Miss King, as Miss Lizzie left the room to prepare herself for riding; "I think that I am entitled to it, since, even with odds against me, I have caused Mr. Audley to do what he himself has just described as an ungraceful thing."

"I acknowledge my guilt," I said, with a low bow, "and can only plead in extenuation that my opponent is irresistible."

"I think that the victory is such a one," remarked Miss Jane Wilton, "as the British general considered his to be at Guilford Court-house. I am sure that were Teresa to speak her real sentiments, she would rather boast of causing persons to do graceful things than those that are ungraceful."

"I thank you for your good opinion," said Miss King, with a smile of real good-humor.

"And now that peace is restored," I observed, "will you allow me to say, Miss King, that the conclusion of our 'war of words' recalls strongly to my mind the often-quoted '*Palmam ferat qui miscuit utile dulci?*'"

"That is almost another declaration of war," she answered. "But I will say no more, since I own the weakness of my position in making the acknowledgment."

Shortly after Miss Lizzie made her appearance, ready arrayed for our ride, and "Good-by's" were exchanged.

CHAPTER XXVII.

CRYSTAL COVE.

A pleasant Ride.—Day-dreams.—Mrs. Dalton.—Little Willie.—Music.—A Ramble on the Shore.—Love's Young Dream.—Major Sullivan and his Nieces.

"LIZZIE," I asked, as we rode at an easy pace down the lane toward the public road, "can you tell me what is the matter with Miss Teresa King? She seems to have a little ill-will toward me."

"I do not know, Clarence," she answered. "Teresa is, I think, naturally fond of satire. Before you came this morning she was criticising almost all of the company who were at aunt's last night, and mostly unfavorably too. You also came in for a share. It appears to me, as well as to yourself, that she is not quite a friend of yours."

"What could I have done to displease her?" I wondered.

"I can not conjecture," she replied, "unless she thought

that you did not show her as much attention as you did somebody else."

She smiled archly.

"I ought not to say so, perhaps, even to you," she resumed; "but I fear that Teresa is rather selfish and exacting. She is an heiress—a fact that is not much known here, I think—and has been accustomed, no doubt, when at home, to receive more attention than she has yet received from our beaux."

"I am sorry," I said, "that any one should feel unfriendly toward me. I hope that I shall appease her yet. But we have a pleasanter subject to discuss, dear Lizzie, than Miss Teresa King."

And then, as we moved slowly along the shady forest-road, riding closely side by side, we—scarcely more than children yet—planned, with many blushes on my part as well as on sweet Lizzie's, our future marriage. Lizzie was to wait for me till I was admitted to the bar, and then we should go to housekeeping in Baltimore. Law business would come plentifully, of course, and at once. When I proposed, however, that we should mention the subject to our parents, Lizzie besought me not to do so for a while. We were so young, she said, that we should be laughed at, even if they assented, of which we would not allow ourselves to entertain a doubt. She accepted aunt Mary's invitation, by-the-by, on condition that her mother should assent to her doing so. The reader will take it for granted that our horses were not much wearied when we arrived at Mrs. Dalton's.

The dwelling-house at Crystal Cove—so called from a small inlet of St. Joseph's Creek that spread its clear waters in front of it—was a large two-story brick building, standing on a considerable elevation, and in the midst of a yard well shaded by bushy locust-trees, the tops of which had been cut off to allow a view, from the upper windows, of the creek—which is here half a mile in width—the river, and the surrounding country.

Juniper came to take our horses at the yard gate.

"Juniper is horse-boy, gardener, and—when mother goes abroad—carriage-driver," said Lizzie, as I assisted her to dis-

mount. "He has filled these different offices for the last twenty-five or thirty years and insists upon filling them still, though much beyond the usual age for his present occupations."

Mrs. Dalton met us at the door. She was a pale and delicate-looking lady, having, like Lizzie, black eyes and hair, the latter being slightly mingled here and there with gray, and was very handsome for her age, which was about forty-five years. She received me with kindness, but there was something like reserve in her manner. I attributed the difference between her reception of me and Mrs. Wilton's to the fact that, when a school-boy in the neighborhood, I had not been so well acquainted with her as with the latter-named. The dwelling of Mrs. Wilton was about half way between Crystal Cove and Old Delight; and, as Cousin Walter was more intimate when a boy with the residents of Fairview than with those of Crystal Cove—partly on account of the closer proximity of the former place to Uncle Weatherby's, partly because he had been a favorite with the deceased husband of Mrs. Wilton, who had no son of his own—I had been led to visiting more frequently at the house of the latter lady than at that of Lizzie's mother. Nor had I often seen Mrs. Dalton at Uncle Weatherby's, as she had been almost constantly confined at home by an invalid husband. Though quite as intimate at that time with Lizzie as with her cousins, and, indeed, more so, my acquaintance with her had been formed and improved at school. Even then she was remarkable for her great beauty; and, having naturally a love for the beautiful, I had even at that early age been strongly attracted toward her. The attraction seemed, indeed, to be mutual; Cousin Walter, on account of our keeping so much together, used to call us, in a kind of patronizing derision, "the infant lovers."

When we entered the house, Lizzie retired to change her dress, and Mrs. Dalton invited me into the parlor. She inquired politely after the health of my father's family, and then asked how long would be my stay in the Neck. She asked this question as if she felt some interest in the answer—what kind of interest I could not tell. Her conversation and man-

ner altogether had the effect of damping my spirits, almost unconsciously to myself. All of my school-time acquaintances whom I had hitherto met had given me a very cordial reception ; and this mere politeness on her part seemed to me coldness in contrast.

On Lizzie's return her mother questioned her about the party of the evening before.

"We had a delightful time," she answered. "Had we not, Clarence?"

"Yes," I replied; "it was the pleasantest evening that I ever spent in all my life."

Mrs. Dalton seemed somewhat surprised both at Lizzie's calling me "Clarence," and at the emphatic manner in which I expressed myself. She made no remark, however; and, after learning who had been present, and what had been done at the party, she arose to leave the room, excusing herself on the ground of having household affairs to attend to. I interrupted her departure for a moment to present Aunt Mary's invitation to Lizzie, and her message to herself, and to request her assent to Lizzie's acceptance. I preferred this petition with some doubt as to the issue, but was very agreeably surprised at her unhesitatingly accepting it.

"One of your uncle Weatherby's negro boys," she observed, "was here this morning with an invitation to all of my family for to-morrow. Tell Mrs. Weatherby that I shall certainly be over in the morning; and, since young and old are invited, I shall bring my little boy with me. By-the-by, Mr. Audley, you must see our little Willie; I will send him in to you."

She left the room; and a mulatto girl, eleven or twelve years old, soon after entered the parlor, leading by the hand a beautiful boy between three and four years of age. His cheeks were rosy with health; his eyes were of a deep blue, and his hair, of a dark-brown color, fell all around his head in glossy curls to his shoulders.

Willie was Mrs. Dalton's only son, as Lizzie was her only daughter. There had been several other children, who had died when infants, or but little more. Of course, little Willie was much petted by the household.

"Come here, Willie," said Lizzie (we were seated on the sofa), "and speak to Mr. Audley, and sis will play a tune on the piano for you. He is very fond of music, Clarence," she added, turning to me.

He came toward me slowly and rather timidly; but when I went to him and took him in my arms he submitted quietly, and sat very still on my knee while Lucy played a lively waltz measure on the piano. He soon became so familiar as to chat with me very freely between the pieces that his sister played; and when after a while his nurse took him out of the room he went rather unwillingly.

The morning passed very pleasantly in music and conversation. Lizzie, who had a very sweet voice, sang a number of songs; sometimes I joined her in a duet; in the intervals we talked on the subject most interesting to us. It is surprising how rapidly the ice of timidity—that almost invariably at first chills the intercourse of young lovers—melted in the glow of this familiar communion.

Mrs. Dalton made her appearance again a short time before dinner, but left us soon after that meal was concluded to take her usual after-dinner "nap."

"Lizzie," she asked, as she arose to leave the room, "did Mr. Morton speak of coming to Crystal Cove this afternoon?"

"No, ma," was the answer, with a slight flushing of the face and neck. "He has to speak at a political meeting at St. Joseph's this afternoon."

The manner of both question and reply puzzled me, and left a disagreeable impression, but of an indefinite nature. Our perceptions are wonderful where our affections are interested.

"Is it wrong, Lizzie," I said, as soon as her mother had disappeared, "for me to ask you what Mr. Morton was speaking to you about so earnestly last night?"

"He was pressing me to give him the rose-bud in my hair. He did not succeed."

"I am afraid," I said, "that the question which I am about to ask is scarcely warrantable, even in the position which we hold toward each other. My interest in all that concerns you

must excuse me. Has Mr. Morton ever spoken to you on the subject of love?"

"I have no objection to answer the question; you have a right to know. I think that he has attempted to do so several times; but I gave him him no encouragement; and when I could not otherwise prevent him, I ran away."

Later in the afternoon, when the high banks of the cove cast a shadow to the water's edge, we walked down to the shore. As the waters of the cove were separated from the yard only by the broad strand of white pebbles—the land sloping to the margin there to the width of fifty yards, and then rising on either hand into abrupt cliffs—we had to pass through but a brief space of sunshine to gain the shady beach. How well I remember still that walk upon the shore, and how pleasantly the hours went by. Lizzie leaning upon my arm, we promenaded slowly to and fro the firm pavement of pebbles, sometimes conversing in low tones, sometimes ceasing our talk but only more fully to feel our happiness.

At length we seated ourselves where a portion of the cliff, having滑ed down to the shore, had become firm and grass-covered in its new position. The view from this point was fine. It was situated just where Crystal Cove and St. Joseph's Creek joined their waters; and as the mouth of the creek—which was quite wide here—was not far off, we had an open view between its banks of the broad Clearwater and its opposite shores. It was a lovely afternoon. A deep blue sky, with a few light and fleecy clouds resting on its clear bosom, bent serenely over us. Golden sunlight shed an inexpressible splendor over the wide expanse of waters before us, and made beautiful lights and shadows over the varied landscape that stretched out before our view, at some points to a great distance. A soft breeze from the southwest brought us freshness from the waves that, rolling in through the wide estuary of the creek, broke upon the shore near our feet, and gave voice to that wild and sublime music which no human soul can listen to unaffected.

"Dear Lizzie," I said, after some moments of silence on

both sides, "this is one of those occasions to be remembered during a lifetime."

"I love this spot," she said, "and often come here to listen to the waters beating upon the shore ; there is something so soothing and yet so elevating in their music. Can you tell me, Clarence, why the sound fascinates us, as it were, with a pleasure so singular ? I have often tried to read the problem."

"I can not tell," I answered ; "but perhaps the ceaseless motion of the waters suggests an image of the restless tides of thought in our own minds, and dimly hints at eternity ; and whatever intimates to man something of his inner nature must always be interesting to him. How sweet it is, dear Lizzie," I added, after a slight pause, "to know that at this moment we are alone in the world together ; that we not only look together upon the same sky and water and landscape, but partake of the same thoughts and feelings."

She made no answer, but looked up into my face with a soul-expression of love and confidence in her dark bright eyes, whose lustre was melted into softness by the ardor of the feeling that shone within them. So beautiful, so loving, so trustful as she looked, I felt a desire to take her into my very heart. I rose, bent over her, and pressed my first kiss upon her pure white brow.

"Sweet Lizzie," I said, "remember me in your prayers to heaven."

"And you, dear Clarence," she replied, "remember me in yours."

We were startled by the sound of oars, and sprang to our feet. The next instant a large batteau, rowed by four strong negro men, and containing under the awning at the stern a stout elderly gentleman of a florid complexion, who was steering the boat, and two young ladies, came rapidly around the point at the opposite side of the mouth of the cove and dashed on toward the landing-place.

The gentleman lifted his hat to us and the ladies waved their handkerchiefs, as we advanced along the shore toward the landing-place to meet them.

"It is Major Sullivan," said Lizzie, "and his nieces whom you met at aunt's last evening. Major Sullivan is a lively old gentleman, and 'goes in,' as he expresses himself for enjoying the world. By-the-by, Clarence, you had very little to say to the Misses Sullivan yesterday; and yet they live on the next plantation to Locust Hill. Bettie is very lively and pleasant."

"And Miss Susan very dignified and graceful," I added, "and both of them 'good-looking.' But the truth is, Lizzie, I was anxious to be with you all the time; and when I could not be with you, I placed myself with those who made me feel nearest to you—your cousins. By the way, Miss Teresa King had no right to complain of me on the score of attention; except you and your cousins, she was the only lady with whom I danced. You see, dear Lizzie, that I am very straightforward, and aim directly at my object."

"I am glad to hear you say so, though I knew that trait in your character before, and love you more for it," she added, blushing; "for now that the subject is mentioned, I may say to you that it is better that you should not show such exclusive attention to me in company. It is so unpleasant to be the subject of talk."

"For myself," I answered, "I care very little what people say or think; but for your sake I shall be more on my guard. I would not allow my love, even if unreturned, to be the source of annoyance to you if I could prevent it."

We were too near the party in the boat, when I finished speaking, to continue the conversation; but she gave me a look expressive of thanks.

The batteau was run upon the shore under the shade of two large oaks that sheltered the landing-place. While Major Sullivan was helping his elder niece, Miss Susan, from the boat, I advanced and offered my hand to Miss Bettie. The negroes rested on their oars.

Miss Bettie introduced me to her uncle.

"Young man," he said, giving my fingers such a grip that shame only prevented me from showing the pain he caused, "I am happy to know you. Your father is one of my oldest

friends. Will Audley and I have had some merry times together. He used to be a lively fellow in his young days; but he is now, I suppose, a very serious man of business."

"My father is still always cheerful," I said.

"I am glad to hear it," he remarked. "I should like to see him; we have not met for a long time."

"He is at Locust Hill now, and will be there for three or four weeks. I am sure that he will be happy to receive a visit from you."

"I shall be certain to give him a call; I should like to hear him laugh heartily, as of old. I say, boys," he said to the oarsmen, "do you think you can row me as far as St. John's Creek in such weather as this? I always like to travel by water when I can, young Audley."

"Yas, marster," answered one of the negro men, "ef we starts ubabout daybreak ter hab de cool er de mornin' fur de row."

"Come to the house," said Lizzie to the major and his nieces; "mother will be glad to see you all."

"We can not stay long," answered the major, as we walked toward the house; "'tis getting late, and we have a long row before us. Speaking of traveling by water, Lizzie—the girls wanted a row, and I wrote to them at your aunt's this morning to say that, if they would go over to Joe Dickson's on the creek here, and let the boy bring the horses back home, I would take them in my boat on my return from St. Joe's, where I had business to-day."

"And we have called to take you along with us, Lizzie," said Miss Susan, "to be convenient to the frolic in the morning."

"I have accepted an invitation from Mrs. Weatherby," answered Lizzie, "to go to Old Delight to stay to-night, otherwise I would go with you with pleasure."

"I bet that this youngster has had something to do with that arrangement," said the major, giving me a hearty slap on the shoulder. "I say, you young Audley, mind how you fall in love with Lizzie; I intend her for my second wife, sir."

Major Sullivan was a widower, with no children.

"We can take Lizzie and Mr. Audley both with us," suggested Miss Susan, "and leave them at Mr. Weatherby's landing. It will not be out of our way, uncle."

"Not at all," said the major. "In fact, I had intended that all the time, and should have said so had you waited awhile. We shall be very glad to have their company; and I think they will find the row agreeable. There is about enough wave on the river to make the rocking of the boat pleasant."

It was so arranged. Juniper was to take Lady Lightfoot over to Old Delight during the evening. The distance from uncle's landing-place to his house being scarcely a quarter of a mile, Lizzie and I intended to walk it. She was to return home with her mother the next morning.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A BOAT-RIDE.

Negro Boat-songs.—Dr. Jackson, the Pompous.—Patent Dog-tail Ointment.—Tongue-tilting.—More Music.—Negro Satire.—Au Revoir.

WE left Crystal Cove about an hour and a half before sunset. Until we got out of the cove the motion of the boat was smooth and steady; but when we dashed out upon the creek she rose and fell with the swell and subsidence of the water. The ladies—all of whom had frequently been upon the water—bore this quietly enough, and were lively and talkative; but when we came out upon the larger and rougher waves of the river they became silent and began to look serious.

"This is getting dull," said the major, after the silence had lasted some minutes; "Come, Charley, give us a song to enliven us a little."

In obedience to this order, Charley struck up a song; the other oarsmen answered in chorus, all timing the strokes of their oars to the measure. The song was not by any means

enlivening, however, either in words or tune—as the reader will perceive. I have entitled it

SOLD OFF TO GEORGY.

1. Farewell, fel-low-sarvants! O - ho! O - ho! I'm gwine way to leabe you; O - ho! O - ho! I'm gwine to leabe de ole coun-ty; O - ho! O - ho! I'm sold off to Geor-gy! O - ho! O - ho!

2. Farewell, ole plantation, (Oho! Oho!)
Farewell, de ole quarter, (Oho! Oho!)
Un daddy, un mammy, (Oho! Oho!)
Un marster, un missus! (Oho! Oho!)

3. My dear wife un one chile, (Oho! Oho!)
My poor heart is breaking; (Oho! Oho!)
No more shall I see you, (Oho! Oho!)
Oh! no more foreber! (Oho! Oho!)

The reader will observe that the lines of the song do not rhyme; and it may be remarked that the negro songs—that is, such as they can compose themselves—are mostly without rhymes. When they do attempt to rhyme they frequently take more than the poetic license, being satisfied—when they can not do better—if the vowel-sounds at the ends of the lines agree.

The tone of voice in which this boat-song was sung was inexpressibly plaintive, and, bearing such a melancholy tune, and such affecting words, produced a very pathetic effect. I saw tears in the eyes of the young ladies, and could scarcely restrain my own. We heard but the three verses given (such songs are sometimes stretched out to many verses); for at the end of the third verse the major interrupted the song.

“Confound such *lively* music,” he exclaimed; “it is mak-

ing the girls cry, I do believe. And with such slow measure to sing to, we shall scarcely get into Weatherby's Creek to-night."

"De boat-songs is always dat way, marster," said Charley—"dat is mo' er less."

"Well, try to find something better than that," said the major; "I am sure that it is impossible for any thing to be more low-spirited in words, or tune, or manner of singing."

"Yas, marster," was Charley's answer. And the negroes sang another boat-song, but not so very sad as their first.

"Charley is right," said Miss Bettie, with a laugh; "the boat-songs are 'all that way, more or less.' I think that we had better have silence than such low-spirited music. Do you not think so, uncle?"

"Entirely," said the major. "The pathetic is well enough when there is need of stirring up our feelings of humanity, but I can see no use in creating mere low spirits."

"I like the music," said Lizzie; "it is sometimes pleasant—if I may speak such a seeming paradox—to be made sad without any personal cause for being so. Such a state of feeling may be called 'the luxury of woe.'"

Miss Susan and I agreed with her. The negroes seemed pleased at our approval.

"Uncle," asked Miss Susan, pointing to a house that stood on a hill on the eastern side of the river (we were keeping near the shore on that side), "whose is that queer-looking building made of a number of small houses joining each other at the gables, and without a tree near?"

"That belongs to the celebrated Dr. Jackson."

"Who is Dr. Jackson?"

"What! have you never heard of the famous Hiram L. Jackson?"

"Is it not the man," asked Miss Bettie, "that you tell so many funny stories about?"

"Say, rather, the man against whose humbuggeries I have declared war."

"I think that I have seen him," I observed. "When I was a school-boy in Chittering Neck, Cousin Walter Weatherby

had some business to attend to for uncle at the county-seat one day, and I accompanied him. When the negro boy who had charge of the stable at the tavern where we took dinner brought our horses up to the yard style for us to mount on our return, a gentleman of a very starched and pompous bearing, having a stiff shirt collar which came up under his ears rather dangerously, and wearing a high bell-crown hat somewhat drawn down toward his right eye, came out of the hotel upon the piazza. As soon as we had mounted, 'Ostler,' said this dignified individual, with an immense assumption of importance, 'bring out my horse—Mr. Jackson's horse—Mr. Hiram L. Jackson's horse.' I suppose this was the person of whom you speak, major?"

"Of course; nobody else in the county would have talked in that way. I should have recognized him readily by the description, even though the name were not mentioned. But Jackson is now called 'Doctor'; he is and has been for some years a practitioner of what he calls the Thompsonian system of medicine. He had a considerable practice at first; but so many died under his treatment that he does at this time but little business."

"What you say, Clarence," said Lizzie, "reminds me of an incident concerning Dr. Jackson, related by a friend of mine. They—that is, my friend and Dr. Jackson—were traveling together in an adjoining county. As they were approaching a small village about the dinner-hour, and were naturally feeling interested about something to eat, they met a negro man. 'Boy,' said Dr. Jackson, 'can you tell us whether there is a caravanserai in this diminutive hamlet where we can procure some of those refreshing and invigorating condiments so absolutely necessary to exhausted nature?' The negro only opened his mouth very widely. Of course, Dr. Jackson's companion put the question in a simple form."

"Have you heard of Jackson's last important invention?" asked the major. "Hiram L., you must know, is a very ingenious man."

We all answered in the negative, and asked for information on the subject.

"I call the story," continued Major Sullivan, "'The Patent Dog-tail Ointment.'

"Dr. Jackson has a number of dogs; and among them is a little terrier that used to have a bob-tail. You will see presently why I say 'used to have'—a rather paradoxical statement apparently. Now, you must know, that Dr. Jackson is a very humane man—remarkably so (witness his medical practice!); and he often thought what a pity it was that while his other dogs could give a salutation or express their gratification by wagging their tails this poor little dog should never have the power of making any demonstration of the kind whatever. Prompted by his humane feelings he 'set to work' to invent a preparation which should cause the stump to grow into a tail again. He at length succeeded in preparing an ointment which promised to answer the purpose. Applying some of it to the 'caudal extremity' (as he termed it), he found to his delight that after a day or two the stump began to grow. It continued to grow until it attained such a length as to be entitled to be called a tail. Dr. Jackson, in great and agreeable excitement—expecting to realize a fortune among the bob-tailed puppies" (I wonder if the major had any reference to the short-skirted frock-coats then worn?—fortunately for me I had on a dress-coat at the time)—"made application for a patent, which he has since obtained. The tail, however, did not stop at the ordinary length, but continued to 'progress'—as Dr. Jackson expressed it—until it became so long as to make an inconvenient burden for the terrier to carry. At length the dog was unable to carry it at all, and a portion of it had to be amputated. The appendage, however, continued to grow at an accelerated ratio until now—not to dwell upon the affair any longer—it has to go upon the horse-block and under the hatchet every morning. Doctor Jackson is at this time occupied, in great anxiety, in investigating two subjects; the one how to weaken his patent ointment, the other how to stop that tail from growing. Doubtlessly he is very anxious to succeed, particularly in the latter object, in order to relieve himself from the remorse which one possessing such tender and sensitive feelings must naturally suffer, who, in his efforts

to do what in his humility he calls a small favor, had inflicted a great and lasting pain."

Gleeful shouts of laughter rang far over the water at the conclusion of this story, the major himself joining in with the rest of us. The dark eyes and white teeth of the negroes gleamed with the merriment whose noisy demonstration their sense of respect for the presence of the white folks with difficulty suppressed.

"I say, you boys, what are you giggling about there?" asked the major, noting a few moments afterward whispering and restrained laughter among the negroes. "If it is something funny let us have it."

"Uncle Sam," answered one of them, "wus er sayin', marster, dat he like ter hab some er dat dog-tail 'intment ter put on de tail uv his huntin' dog. Says dat when he chases er varmint inter er ground-hole he alwus eats it up; un it would be so convenient ter hab er tail er few yards long; 'cause den he mought twist de eend uv it erround his han' un pull de dog out uv de hole 'fore he could do dat."

"That is pretty good for Sam," said the major, when the laughter which this appendix to his joke caused had subsided. "Suppose, Sam, that you ask Dr. Jackson for some of his ointment? As Weatherby, I am told, has, in his usual way, invited every body in the neighborhood, I take it for granted that the great Thompsonian will be at the frolic to-morrow, so that you will have a good chance to make your request."

"He mought git mad, marster," suggested Sam.

"What if he does?" said the major, "firing up"—to use his own expression—"he will not strike you; he knows his own good too well to dare to lay his hand in that way on one of *my* negroes. I will send a note to him to ask some of his patent ointment for you."

"I would not do that, uncle," said Miss Susan; "I think that you are hard enough upon Dr. Jackson to make such tales about him."

"I only follow his example in making *tales*," answered the major, looking at us strongly with his round and prominent eyes, and taking off his hat and running his fingers through

his rather stiff grizzly hair—two habits with him when he thought that he had said a good thing; and, as he often thought so, his eyes had acquired an habitually staring look, and his hair generally stood out rather straight from his head:

"While you have that story about Dr. Jackson to tell, major," I remarked, "you may say, with the ghost in *Hamlet*,

"I could a *tail* unfold

Would * * * * *
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from the spheres,
Thy knotted and combined locks to part,
And each particular hair to stand on end
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine."

These lines were given with a pointed emphasis.

The young ladies looked at the major's tumbled head and burst into gleeful laughter.

"I say, you young Audley," he said, looking at me askance, and with an assumed ferocity of expression, "are you serious, sir, or only joking? Answer me that, sir."

"Seriously speaking, major," I replied, "I am joking."

"Bettie," asked Lizzie, "why do you not come to your uncle's defense as you did the other day when Mr. Travers said something 'on that head?'"

"Because," answered Miss Bettie, "I was on my guard against Mr. Travers; but one does not expect any thing of that kind from Mr. Audley, you know."

"I thank you, Miss Bettie," I said, "that you leave it doubtful whether you intend a compliment to my courtesy or a satire on my dullness. But what was it that Mr. Travers said, Miss Lizzie, and what did Miss Bettie answer?"

"Mr. Travers, you know," said Lizzie, "has a long, straight nose, which is either naturally or accidentally somewhat bent from the perpendicular. 'Miss Bettie,' he said, 'your uncle's head looks this morning "like a flock of goats that appears from Gilead."'" 'And Mr. Travers's nose,' retorted Bettie, 'is "like the tower of Lebanon that looketh toward Damascus."'''

The old major laughed the loudest of all.

"That is one of the best things," he said, "that I ever

heard. You had him there, Bettie; and I must think of a suitable present to express my thanks to you before your visit to the Neck is over. What did Travers say to that, eh?"

"He laughed very uproariously," said Miss Susan, "and, I think, attempted in that way, to hide his inability to make a rejoinder."

We had some time before rounded Point Quiet, the long point to the south of the Flats, and had nearly gained the channels leading into Weatherby's Creek. Our boat was now speeding at a swift rate along a lee shore; and the water, shielded from the wind by the high cliffs of the river, lay tranquil around us.

"How clear the water is," remarked Miss Susan, looking over the side of the boat; "I can see the fishes moving among the sea-grass on the bottom."

"Our river is famous for the purity of the water," said the major, with some enthusiasm of manner, "and has been said by those who are competent to give an opinion, to be one of the most beautiful streams in the world."

"I have been told," observed Lizzie, "that its present title is a literal interpretation of the name given to it by the Indians."

"So they say," answered the old gentleman; "and the red men were sensible in that at any rate. But let us have some music; I always like to hear singing when on the water. Lizzie, will you sing us the Canadian Boat Song? Bettie and Susan do not sing, they say."

"I will, with pleasure," replied Lizzie, "if Clarence will assist me with his voice."

So we sang, keeping time to the action of the oars.

"Charley looks as if he would sing us another song," said Miss Bettie. "What is that lively little song, Charley, which I heard you and some of the hands sing the other day, when you were hanging tobacco at the barn? I am sure that you can row to that."

"Sure unnuff, young misstis," answered Charley; "I had forgot dat. But dat's a corn song; un we'll hab ter sing it slow ter row to."

"Try it, at any rate," said the major.

"Sartinly, sah, ef de marsters un mistisses wants it."

Charley was evidently somewhat vexed at the disparaging remarks made by the petitioners on his previous performance. Nevertheless, there came a quiet smile to his face as he began the following song:

ROUN' DE CORN, SALLY.

Chorus. *Solo.* *Chorus.*

1. Hooray, hooray, ho! Eoun'de corn, Sally! Hooray for all de lub-ly la-dies!

Chorus. *Solo.* *Chorus.*

Roun' de corn, Sal-ly! Hooray, hoo-ray, ho! Roun' de corn, Sal-ly!

Solo. *Chorus.* *Fine.*

Hoo-ray for all de lub-ly la-dies! Roun' de corn, Sal-ly!

Solo. *Chorus.*

Dis lub's er thing dat's sure to hab you, Roun' de corn, Sal-ly!

Solo. *Chorus.*

He hole you tight, when once he grab you, Roun' de corn, Sal-ly!

Solo. *Chorus.*

Un ole un ug-ly, young un prit-ty, Roun' do corn, Sal-ly!

Solo. *Chorus.* *D. C.*

You need-en try when once he git you, Roun' de corn, Sal-ly!

2. Dere's Mr. Travers lub Miss Jinny;

He thinks she is us good us any.

He comes from church wid her er Sunday,

Un don't go back ter town till Monday.

Hooray, hooray, ho! etc.

3. Dere's Mr. Lucas lub Miss T'reser,

Un ebery thing he does ter please her;

Dey say dat 'way out in Ohio,
She's got er plenty uv de rhino.
Hooray, hooray, ho! etc.

4. Dere's Marster Charley lub Miss Bettie;
I tell you what—he thinks her pretty;
Un den dey mean ter lib so lordly,
All at de Monner House at Audley.

Hooray, hooray, ho! etc.

5. Dere's Marster Wat, he lub Miss Susan;
He thinks she is de pick un choosin';
Un when dey gains de married station,
He'll take her to de ole plantation.

Hooray, hooray, ho! etc.

6. Dere's Marster Clarence lub Miss Lizzy;
Dressing nice, it keeps him busy;
Un where she goes den he gallants her,
Er riding on his sorrel prancer.

Hooray, hooray, ho! etc.

This song caused much amusement at the expense of each one of us who in turn became the subject of satire. The hit at Lizzie and me was the hardest, as we were both present, and was, therefore, I suppose, introduced at the end. Several laughing efforts were made by the ladies to interrupt the singing, when the words began to have reference to those who were present; but the old major insisted on "having it out," as he expressed himself. The decided "effect" produced by his song completely re-established Charley's good-humor. The old major, being the only white person present who was spared, of course enjoyed the occasion immensely; his laughter rang loud and far through the clear air, and was echoed back from the banks of the creek.

"Those are not the words, Charley," said Miss Bettie, "that you sung to that tune the other day."

"No, miss," was the answer. "Marse Weatherby's little Sam was ober at Sin Joseph's tud-day, un larnt um ter me. He said Clotildy made um un larnt um ter him dis morning."

"But why did she make that verse," I asked, "about my 'gallanting' Miss Lizzie, as she calls it? I never rode out with Miss Lizzie till this morning."

"Sam said," answered Charley, "dat he asked Clotildy ub-bout dat, un she said you was er gwine ter do it."

"I say, young Audley," said the major, "you forget that the poet has a right to foreshadow coming events. I have a dim recollection of having read somewhere that there was a time at least

"When the name
Of poet and of prophet was the same."

And the major ran his fingers through his hair and gave me one of his sharp looks.

The domestic servants in the slave states have a quick insight into affairs of the heart where their young "marsters" and "missusses" are concerned. It was, moreover, evident that 'Possum had been taking notes during his short stay at Fairview the previous evening; and Clotilda doubtlessly had learned that I had gone that morning to escort Lizzie home.

Soon after the song was finished, and as the rosy light of the setting sun was painting earth and heaven in gorgeous hues, the boat grounded on the shore at Uncle Weatherby's landing. There Lizzie and I parted from the lively old major and his nieces with merry good-by's, after I had been obliged to promise the old gentleman a half dozen times to come to see him and "make myself at home."

"Tell Weatherby," said the major, as the boat was backing off into deep water, and we were turning away from the shore, "that he may trust the word of 'Old Fisherman Tom'—as he has the impudence to call me—that to-morrow will be a fine day, and that I shall be much disappointed if we do not have a good time of it. Mind, Lizzie, you are to dance the first cotillon with me to-morrow. And I say, young Audley," he added in a louder voice—for the boat was now some distance from the shore—"take care that you don't forget that Lizzie is to be my second wife, sir."

"Lizzie," I asked, as we walked toward the dwelling-house at Old Delight, "do you intend to dance the first set with the major? He is old enough and stout enough to have given up dancing."

"He is very fond of dancing yet," she answered, "and

dances well, too. Of course, I must dance the first set with him ; you know the rule."

" May I consider myself number two, then," I asked, " on your list for to-morrow ? The truth is, I am engaged myself for the first set to Cousin Lucy."

" To be sure you may," she said. " But, upon my word, Clarence, if Lucy were a little older, I should consider her a dangerous rival."

CHAPTER XXIX.

AN EVENING AT OLD DELIGHT.

A Consultation interrupted.—Negro Moonlight Sports.—The Juber Dance.—Clotilda in her glory.—The political Meeting.—The dignified Mr. Jarboe.—Jack Wild.

WE found on our arrival at Old Delight that Juniper had brought Lady Lightfoot and returned home—for the distance between Crystal Cove and the former place is much greater by water than by land. Cousin Walter and Mr. Lucas had not yet returned from the political meeting ; and Uncle Weatherby, who had also attended the meeting, but had left it before the speaking was concluded, told me that he did not expect them until near bedtime, as they would stay to " electioneer" until the very last of the crowd should leave for home. The political fever—as some of my readers will recollect—was very high at the time.

Lizzie was taken off by the ladies immediately on our arrival ; but we met soon after at the supper-table. After that meal was concluded, Aunt Mary invited uncle and me to her sitting-room to take part in a consultation with the ladies about the arrangements for the morrow. Our conclave was soon interrupted by the appearance of Clotilda.

" Missus," she said, " de young niggers is er dancin' ober at Aun' Jinny's quarter ; may I go ummong um ?"

" You may, presently," said aunt ; " I have something for you to do first which will occupy you but a little while."

"Cousin Clarence," said Lucy, when Clotilda had gone upon aunt's commission, "if you will go to Aunt Jinny's, I think you will have an opportunity of hearing Clotilda make some juber rhymes. I am almost certain that she made her request of ma in the presence of you and Miss Lizzie, because she wishes to have you both among her audience."

"Mary," observed uncle, "suppose we adjourn our consultation while the young people go to see the fun. Perhaps you would like to go, too?"

"No," answered aunt. "I think that you and I had better stay at home. Our presence might act as a restraint upon the merriment."

So Lizzie and Lucy and I hastened off to Aunt Jinny's quarter, which was one of those before spoken of as being in the edge of the wood to the north of "the house"—as the negroes name, *par excellence*, their master's dwelling—and which stood not far from Aunt Kate's, which it almost exactly resembled. The full moon shone so brightly from an unclouded sky that her lustre seemed

"Like daylight sick and turned a little paler."

Upon benches placed against the outside wall of the hut upon each side of the door sat several of the older negroes of both sexes from the neighboring quarters. Ike was singing the *words* of a jig in a monotonous tone of voice, beating time meanwhile with his hands alternately against each other and against his body. To this music about a dozen or so negro boys and girls were dancing on the hard-beaten ground before

"The old cabin door."

Their idea of excellence in dancing seemed to be that it consisted in a rapid motion of the feet; and some of the dancers absolutely moved their feet so swiftly as to cause them to be indistinct in the moonlight; yet even in this rapid action the blows of the feet kept time and tune with the music, and gave it emphasis. The scene was one of hearty glee; all seemed to be enjoying themselves vastly.

Our arrival momentarily checked the dancing, every body had to say "Good ebenin' young missuses! Good ebenin' young marster!" But the jig was immediately renewed.

Shortly afterward we saw Clotilda speeding toward the hut across the moonlit field.

"Dere comes dat crazy Till," said Uncle Jim, "runnin' same as ef er ghost wus arter her. Gwine ter hab de Juber now sure's you born. Ike, you mout as well gib in."

As soon as she joined the throng, Clotilda, without a moment's pause, whirled herself among and through the crowd of dancers, till, having gained the opposite side to that at which she had entered, she turned and faced them, and began to recite the following verses in a shrill sing-song voice, keeping time to the measure, as Ike had done, by beating her hands sometimes against her sides, and patting the ground with her feet. An interval of some seconds between the verses afforded time for the dancers to follow the direction given in each; but the beating of the hands and feet continued without intermission. It should be understood that, in making the imitations mentioned below, the dancer has to take care that the motions of his feet keep time to the measure.

JUBER DANCE.

Laudy! how it make me laugh
Ter see de niggers all so saf';
See um dance de foolish jig,
Un neber min' de juber rig.

Juber!

(Negroes dancing every one after his or her own fashion, but keeping time to the beat.)

Juber lef' un Juber right;
Juber dance wid all yo' might;
Juber here un Juber dere,
Juber, Juber ebery where.

Juber!

(The dancers get into confusion in their frantic efforts to follow the directions. *Clotilda*, rebukingly,

"Git out, you silly breed!
Can't you dance de Juber reed?"

Once ole Uncle Will
Gwine ullong de side de hill,

Stump his toe uggin er weed,
Un spill all his punkin seed.

Juber !

(Ludicrous imitations of Uncle Will stumbling and trying to recover himself, and to prevent his pumpkin seed from falling at the same time. *Uncle Will*, with great disgust, "Imperdin piece!"

Dere's ole Uncle Jack
Hab er pain in his back;
Ebery time he try ter skip
Den he hab ter get er limp.

Juber !

(Active skips suddenly changed to a variety of awkward limps expressive of great pain in the back. *Uncle Jack*, angrily, "De outrageous hussy!")

Guess I knows er nigger gal—
Dere she is, her name is Sal—
Un she hab to min' de baby,
Show us how she rock de cradle.

Juber !

(A variety of swaying motions, intended to represent cradle-rocking in a ridiculous view. *Sall*, a daughter of Aunt Kate, and nurse of a baby sister, indignantly, "I alwus said Clotildy wus crazy!")

Ebery body know Aunt Jinny,
Nothing ken be said uggin her;
When she fever nigger take,
My ! how dat ole lady shake.

Juber !

(All the dancers are suddenly seized with a terrible shaking ague. *Aunt Jinny*, with much feeling, "Neber min', you on-feelin' cretur, maybe you git it yo'self next time!")

Uncle Meshach, Uncle Jim,

(Most of the dancers hesitate and look alarmed.)

Once I seed 'em saw er lim',
Fur ter men' de garden palin's,
Un ter make de pos' un railin's.

Juber !

(Possum and Crowley make an amusing imitation of two old



men working at a cross-cut saw; the rest dance a jig step. Uncle Meshach looks savage, but says nothing. *Uncle Jim*, ferociously, "Neber min', I pay you yit!" *Clotilda*, offended at not being obeyed by all,

"Ain't you shame, you lazy niggers?
Wonner if dem's de Juber riggers?"")

Marser Clarry, 'pon er time,
Want ter hear Clotildy rhyme;
One good turn diserb unnudder,
Lemme see him dance de Juber.
Juber!

(Laughable imitations of one not acquainted with the Juba, trying to dance it. "Marser Clarry" seeming to be as much amused at the fun as any one else, the "colored" individuals who have been burlesqued, look pleasant again.)

Try de Juber reed uggin;
Try yo' bes', un try to win.

Juber forrud, Juber back;
Juber dis way, Juber dat;
Juber in, un Juber out;
Juber, Juber, all ubabout.

Juber!

(*Finale*, uproar and confusion. Some of the dancers run out from among the rest in alarm; the most of them, trying to follow the instructions of the Juber beater, get entangled with each other, are "tripped up" in the confusion and fall, in various positions, in a struggling heap. Unrestrained laughter by every one.)

"Now," said Clotilda, "you kin dance your jigs un reels, un whatever you likes; but de Juber fus!"

"Clotilda," asked Lizzie, "why did you not give Uncle Porringer a verse? His being sometimes fiddler, sometimes preacher, gave you a good chance at him."

"'Cause we's bof house servants, Miss; un Uncle Porringer has power in de house. Dat's de reason Crowley un Possum didden min' Uncle Jim. Den I want Uncle Porringer ter play on de fiddle for us. Uncle Porringer," she continued,

crossing over to the bench where he sat, "wone you gib us er fiddle tune? Do please, dat's er good Uncle Porringer."

"What you talkin' ubabout, gal?" said the old man, pretending to be offended; "I plays fur de white folks."

"Come, play for them, do, uncle," pleaded Lucy; "and then you will be obliging us, too. We shall not think the less of you for it; shall we, Miss Lizzie?"

"No," answered Lizzie; "but we shall think more of him."

"And you shall not go without your fee, either, uncle," I added, slipping a piece of silver into his hand.

"Tank you fur de money, young marster," he said; "you wus alwus good ter de black people. But de young mistisses axing was unnough. Tell you what, Marse Clarence," he added, in a loud whisper, "you's in dangerous company, sah; de two puttiest young ladies in de Neck."

The fiddle was soon brought from Uncle Porringer's quarter, which was near, and the young negroes arranging themselves for a dance, a lively and rattling jig tune was struck up.

"I declare," said Lizzie, taking a few graceful steps—she made even the jig graceful—"it is almost impossible to keep one's feet still while listening to Uncle Porringer's music."

"Suppose we dance, too," I suggested.

"I do not care," she answered; "if you will wait till this jig is over, we will get the old uncle to play a reel, and then you and Lucy and I can dance a three-handed reel, as they call it."

And so we did, and enjoyed our frolic very much, too. When we left Aunt Jinny's quarter, the young negroes were dancing with unflagging zeal, and seemed determined to keep the frolic up as long as Uncle Porringer's patience lasted. As the old fellow was fond of "hard" cider, a bucketful of which had been sent over from "the house" shortly after our arrival, the prospect was that his patience would last as long as the drink, more than half of which was yet unused. Most of the old folks left when we did.

When we returned to the house we found that Cousin Walter and Lucas had returned. They were eating a late supper, and were in fine spirits and full of the meeting.

"Clarence," said Cousin Walter, "you lost a great deal by not being at St. Joe's this evening; we had a stirring time. Lucas exceeded himself. Morton brought a charge against him for something that took place in the Legislature last winter (you know, I suppose, that he was a member); but Lucas had the documents on hand, and you never saw a man put down as Morton was put down by Lucas."

"Did you note what Jarboe said, Weatherby?" asked Lucas of Cousin Walter.

"No; what was it?"

"You know Jarboe, Mr. Weatherby?"

"It is impossible to live in the neighborhood of St. Joseph's without knowing him," said uncle.

"Then you know that he is a great admirer of Morton. Imagine, Mr. Audley, a short and rather stout man, with a face of that brick-dust color which nothing but a very constant attention to the whisky-jug can confer, and who wears a ragged straw hat and coarse linen roundabout and pantaloons, much worse for the wear, and with large new patches of the same material on each knee and elbow. Then imagine this person to assume, in his words, his walk, the tone of his voice, the expression of his countenance, his very position in standing, an importance that the highest station can scarce lay claim to, and you have the picture of Mr. John Jarboe, constable in and for the county and state aforesaid."

"I can see him 'in my mind's eye' very distinctly," I said.

"Jarboe is very fond of big words," continued Lucas. "He was leaning against the speaker's stand near to Morton, and had been 'putting on' a more and more dignified and contemptuous bearing at each renewed cheer for our cause; but when the last and rousing hurrah was given he could not contain himself any longer. 'Well,' he said, 'if a ristercratecal gentleman of one of the first families in the county is to be put down that there way by a set of rapscallions and tattered-mallions, the Injuns is, comparativously the civilized people, and it is gitting to be full time for all gentlemen to abscise into retiracy among the aborgoines of the country.'"

A merry laugh followed this story.

"To get away from politics," said uncle—"for I see that Clarence is ready to take up the cudgels against you, and Lizzie, too, favors the other side—what you say of Jarboe reminds me of old Larrans, famous for his long prayers. He is very fond of new phrases—an unfortunate habit for an illiterate man—and this mania often leads him into ludicrous mistakes. I heard him pray at the camp-meeting near the county-seat a week or two ago, and he used this singular expression, 'Oh Lord! take us as we is, and is we as.'"

Aunt Mary did not join in the laugh that followed. Although she made no remark, I saw that, in her simple nature, she doubted whether the joke did not trench too nearly upon sacred things.

Some conversation followed in regard to the preparations of the next day; after which, as the hour was growing late, we all sought our sleeping apartments.

"Lucas," asked Cousin Walter, as we ascended the stairs, "did you see Jack Wild this afternoon, when he was brought into St. Joe's by an old negro man? He was rather drunk, and as 'muddy in his dress as in his intellect."

"Was he the man on horseback," asked Lucas, "who drew away such a large number of the audience while Morton was speaking?"

"Yes."

"I had intended to ask you about that matter; but it happened so early in the afternoon that subsequent events put it out of my mind. There was so much laughter in the crowd around him that my curiosity was aroused to learn what was going on, but I could not leave the platform for the speakers, you know."

"You would have been much amused," said Cousin Walter. "He made quite a speech, telling all about his courtship with a Miss Woodruff of Baltimore, who has been recently on a visit to his sister. She left for her home to-day; and I should think, from what Jack Wild says, that his courtship has had the usual termination of such affairs with him. It would make an amusing story for the papers, Clarence."

At my request he related to me, before we went to sleep,

most of the incidents the detail of which begins with the next chapter. A part of them—and especially the contents of the concluding paragraph—is based upon subsequent information.

How sweet were my thoughts of Lizzie as I closed my eyes in slumber! How happy the dreams that united us! The same roof covered us both. Did she so think of me as she sank to sleep? did she dream so of me afterward? did the same guardian angels watch over us both through the night? My heart answered "Yes" to all these questions.

CHAPTER XXX.

LOVE *vs.* LIQUOR; A CASE IN WHICH THE PLAINTIFF IS NONCITED.

Honor bright.—“Every Jack should have a Gill.”—Temperance.—A Feint.—A Temperance Lecture.

“HURRAH for honor bright, word kept and trials over!” cried Jack Wild, as he entered a groggeries in the little village of St. Joseph’s.

“Why, Tee-total Jack, you are in fine spirits this afternoon. What has happened?” said Tom Sussex—one of that dangerous class of individuals who call themselves “moderate drinkers,” but who can, more properly speaking, drink a great deal without becoming absolutely drunk—a man who always spoke highly of temperance society, but who was never known to refuse a glass.

“It has been a long time since we have seen you here,” continued this individual, after salutations had been exchanged. “I hope you are not going to break your pledge? A member of a temperance society should show a better example.”

“But I am not a member of a temperance society; time’s up to-day. I joined for only six months, you know, by way of trial; and a trial it has been to me, truly. I signed on the

fifth of February, at 4 o'clock, P.M., and 'tis now the fifth of August, 5 minutes after 4, P.M." (Looking at his watch.) "If that is not a correct calculation, I know nothing of arithmetic. So you see I have given good measure—I hope you'll do the same by me, Dick," (to the bar-keeper)—"and kept my word strictly. But a man who has been thirsty for six months has a right to be in want of a drink. Join me, Tom?"

"Of course, if your time's up; I would never countenance a man in breaking his pledge. But I heard that you were a confirmed temperance man, tee-total, and had determined to sign the pledge for life, on account of this young Baltimore lady, Miss Woodruff, who, they say, declares she'll never marry any but a temperance man."

"So I have, Short-legs," said Jack (but added to himself, "No such thing, though"); "but I must take a few farewell glasses to get my courage up."

"I don't like nick-names," said Sussex.

"Neither do I," said Jack. "I shouldn't be called 'Tee-total' now, at any rate, as I am just about to take a drink. But your Short-legs will stick to you through life."

"And Tee-total will to you, now, whether you sign the pledge or not."

"Well, no matter. The liquor's waiting; fill up your glass."

"By-the-by," said Tom, as he mixed his toddy, "how do you come on with this Baltimore lady? I hope your luck is better than usual."

Jack cast a side glance at the speaker, which showed that he was not very well pleased at the insinuation contained in the latter part of his speech.

"Oh, I shall do very well, I presume," he answered, "if I can only keep from drinking more than one glass at a time. I have already made a decided impression."

And Jack arranged his neckcloth, pulled his coat more tightly around his waist, and looked down at his person complacently. He would no doubt have examined himself in a looking-glass had there been one convenient. But they sel-

dom keep such articles in a grog-shop ; it might injure their trade to let a man see how he looks when drunk.

"What shall the toast be ?" asked Sussex, as he finished stirring his glass.

"Your speaking of Miss Woodruff reminds me of one. Here's to Temperance."

"Very good, indeed," said Sussex, laughing. "That's her name, I suppose ?"

"Yes."

"Which Temperance shall it be, then ?"

"Both."

"Then here's to Temperance."

And the "blue ruin" was swallowed.

Jack Wild belonged to that unfortunately too large class of individuals specified as good-natured and good-for-nothing. He is one of those who, the world says, harm no one but themselves. But the world makes a great mistake. Any one who has connections or relations can not injure himself without injuring them. Not to speak of wounded affections, the disgrace resulting from the drunkenness or misconduct of such an one will, in a greater or less degree, attach itself to them.

Jack Wild was a great admirer of the fair sex ; a face in any degree pretty was sure to strike his fancy. Almost every girl in his own class of society within twenty miles of St. Joseph's, who had any pretensions to a personal appearance above mediocrity had had an opportunity of declining the offer of his "hand and heart." Jack's fate was invariably a rejection ; for, though he was quite a handsome young fellow, his intemperate habits were too well known for any girl of his acquaintance, even the most simple, to think of intrusting her happiness to him. It was the knowledge at length forced upon him of his being in this predicament that had induced him to take the pledge for six months. During nearly the whole of that period, however, this course had not produced the fruits which he had anticipated ; his fate had been as usual. The girls, no doubt, feared that a habit of so long standing could not be cured in a few months.

Such was the desperate condition of Jack's prospects of a

matrimonial speculation when, a week or two previous to the scene which we have just described, Miss Temperance Woodruff, a young lady whose acquaintance his sister had formed during a visit to Baltimore, came to St. Joseph's to spend a few weeks in compliance with an invitation from Miss Susan Wild.

As Temperance was really a very pretty girl, and was said to have in her own right a property worth a few thousand dollars, Jack was not long in coming to the determination of again trying his luck in the matrimonial lottery. In this instance his hope had some prospect of being realized; as Temperance, who knew nothing of his previous habits, had been pleased in the outset by his good-looking person and cheerful, good-natured manners, and as he had taken care, as soon as he learned her views in regard to drinking, to inform her that he had signed the pledge. Besides he had two influential co-adjudicators in his mother and sister.

The reader shall not be troubled with a detailed account of Jack's courtship; courtships are interesting only to those immediately concerned. Suffice it to say that he succeeded better than could have been anticipated. Miss Woodruff, who—notwithstanding Jack's success may speak somewhat to her discredit on this point—was a rather prudent girl, had agreed to take his "for better, for worse," if at the end of twelve months their regard for each other should continue undiminished. Though Jack would have been better pleased with a speedier settlement of affairs, yet he was obliged to consent to the terms since none more agreeable could be obtained; and a great consolation was that, since for most of the period of probation they would be a hundred miles apart, he would have constant opportunity of indulging his darling propensity without the knowledge of his lady-love. This pre-determined breach of faith would seem to give force to the counsel of the old song,

"Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,
Men were deceivers ever."

Nevertheless, the counsel is a libel; fortunately for confiding ladies all men are not Jack Wilds.

Jack had taken Miss Woodruff, accompanied by his sister, on several horseback excursions into the country in the neighborhood of the village. On such an excursion were they engaged one bright and beautiful afternoon in the latter part of August. The sultriness of summer was not felt; for a breeze from the northwest, which had prevailed for a day or two, had cooled the air, making it still more pleasant by contrast with the previous heat. The agreeable state of the atmosphere, the elastic motion of their steeds, the beauty of the scenery through which they were passing—every thing—tended to make their ride delightful; and the air rang with their merry laughter. Such, however, was not destined to be the termination of their expedition.

Jack's spirits are generally gay, and on this occasion his liveliness was added to by the hope that at a house on the side of the road by which they were to return homeward, and where his father had desired him to stop a moment on some important business, he might have an opportunity of renewing the one-at-a-time glass to which he had restricted himself. On stopping at this house, however, he unfortunately made the one glass equal in strength to three or four of his usual drinks, and by the time he overtook the ladies was scarcely able to keep his seat on horseback.

"Hallo, sis, Susan—Miss Woodruff, Temperance, do not ride so fast," he cried; for, on his coming up they had urged their horses to a gallop.

The reins were immediately tightened. Miss Woodruff looked surprised.

"My dear Jack," exclaimed his sister, "what is the matter? Are you sick?" Yet she knew well what was the matter with him.

"Oh, dreadfully sick, sis," he said; for he was not too drunk to take the hint, though too drunk to act the sober man; "I took a glass of water at Mr. Moore's, and I felt sick immediately after drinking. Oh! I feel as if I were going to faint."

Of course, the ladies made exclamations of sorrow and surprise at hearing this declaration.

"Do you think that you can keep your seat until we reach

the village?" asked Temperance, in a voice expressive of tenderness and anxiety.

"Thank you," said the hypocrite, "I will try to do so." But he had already begun to waver.

The ladies drew up their horses one on each side of him; and the party proceeded at a slow walk; Miss Woodruff casting at Jack from time to time the most tender and anxious glances, Susan watching him closely with a face expressive of a fear of discovery mingled occasionally with a touch of shame, and the object of their care himself staring steadily at his horse's ears, and emitting from time to time the most dismal groans.

As the influence of the brandy which he had drunk was increased no little by continued motion, the answers of Jack to the affectionate inquiries of his companions became more and more indistinct until he was apparently unable to speak, and, after some mumbling and ineffectual efforts to articulate, became altogether silent.

The real distress of Temperance and the feigned distress of Susan can not be described, when they were convinced that the spell of utter silence was upon the object of their solicitude; especially when he began to sway so violently from side to side as to be in danger each moment of falling to the ground. This misfortune actually occurred when they were within sight of the village. A soft mud-puddle in the middle of the road broke the headlong fall of the unhappy youth, and tenderly received him on its bosom. He rolled over upon his side—a sort of instinct seeming to direct him in the choice of the easiest position—closed his eyes and appeared to resign himself to his fate.

"Oh, he is dead!" cried Temperance, with horror expressed in her face.

But Susan, who saw that the fall had not done him much hurt, if any, and who entertained no fear but that of discovery—which she began to consider almost inevitable—after one or two exclamations of "Oh, my brother! my brother!" uttered to carry on the farce of deception which was being played upon Temperance, sprang to the ground, and, seizing the

unfortunate man, attempted to drag him out of the mud. This she was unable to do until Miss Woodruff, at length recovering somewhat her presence of mind, also dismounted and came to her assistance. Scarcely had they succeeded in rescuing the bedaubed toper from the mire, when they were joined by a gentleman on horseback, Dr. Turner, a physician of the village.

"Bless me, Miss Wild," exclaimed the new-comer, "what ails your brother?"

"He was riding with us," she answered, desiring to quiet the suspicions which she saw had at once arisen in the mind of the questioner, "and fell from his horse. Feel his pulse, doctor, if you please, and see what is the matter with him. I am in hopes it is only a faint."

Doctor Turner felt Jack's pulse, and then placed his face near to his patient's, as if to smell his breath.

"You are right, Miss Wild," he remarked; "it *is* only a *feint*. But he will not soon recover; we had best, therefore, try to get him home."

The horses were still quietly standing near, and the ladies were soon mounted. The patient, after being considerably roused by one or two severe shakes, which the doctor contrived, as if accidentally, to give him, was helped, or rather almost lifted to the saddle, where being held by the physician, he was safely conducted home and conveyed to bed.

But Miss Woodruff had ceased to feel much uneasiness on account of Jack's health. There had been something in the doctor's mode of speaking and acting with regard to the patient, which had at length aroused in her mind a suspicion of the true state of the case; and once aroused, it was easily confirmed.

The next day Mr. Wild was much better, indeed entirely recovered, except a merely bearable headache. He was naturally anxious to have an interview with his lady-love, to discover whether or not she was aware of the true cause, of his indisposition of the previous evening. During the morning she was invisible to him; but in the course of the afternoon he succeeded in obtaining an opportunity of conversing with her alone.

"Why were you so chary to me, Temperance," he asked, "of your presence this morning?"

"Let me answer your question, Mr. Wild, by asking another. Tell me candidly, what was the cause of your illness of yesterday evening?"

Jack looked into her face for a clew to guide his answer. What he saw there determined him to make a virtue of necessity, and to answer her question with as much truth as was absolutely requisite, and no more.

"To be candid, I took a glass of brandy at Mr. Moore's, and not being accustomed to drink, it had more effect on me than I had anticipated."

"One glass could scarcely have so overcome a person who had even never before tasted a drop in his life. Were you as much intoxicated as you appeared to be?"

"I was not. I was afraid that if I spoke much I should betray myself, and pretended therefore to be too sick to talk."

"Why did you fall from your horse, then?"

"That I could not help."

"Do you think, Mr. Wild, that the deception which you practiced in this case lessens in any important degree the sin of drunkenness?"

"I do not pretend to justify the deception under any other plea than the force of my love. I knew your ideas with regard to temperance, and feared that if you discovered my intoxication I might lose you."

"A reasonable fear. But why did your love not deter you from drinking?"

"I thought that one glass could scarcely intoxicate me."

"You do not understand me," said Temperance.

But Jack did not wish to understand her, or rather did not wish her to understand that he did; so he continued without appearing to notice the interruption.

"But I hope that you do not mean any thing serious when you say that my fear of losing you was reasonable."

"I can never marry a man who breaks his temperance pledge."

"But I have broken no pledge, Temperance; I had signed

for only six months, and the time has expired upward of a week."

"That does make a difference, indeed. But why do you not sign again?"

"That I did not intend to do for a while, that I might satisfy myself that I had strength enough to abstain from drinking without a pledge."

"Now that you are convinced that you have not, there is no excuse for not signing again."

"I will not sign till your return to Baltimore, that I may prove to you that *now* I can control myself. On the day of your return home I will join the Temperance Society again."

After Miss Woodruff had "taken the liberty" (as Jack observed in describing the conversation to his crony, Tom Sussex) of reading her lover a very edifying lecture on the beauties of total abstinence, which occupied nearly a half hour in being delivered, the following arrangement was entered into: that Jack should sign the pledge on the day of Miss Woodruff's departure, and that the conditional engagement should be considered as renewed, in case the gentleman should not in the interim see proper to indulge himself in a glass; or, as Jack construed it, should not be caught in so doing.

"Bless my stars!" said Wild to himself, when he was at length released from the room, "what an excellent scold she is practicing to make herself."

CHAPTER XXXI.

LOVE vs. LIQUOR; A CASE IN WHICH THE PLAINTIFF IS NON-SUITED—*Concluded.*

More Haste, less Speed.—Mr. Wild gets into a tight Fit, is beautifully swamped, and left in the lurch by his Lady-love. — His indignant Eloquence.—He forswears Woman's Love forever.

THE day for Miss Woodruff's departure for Baltimore at length arrived. Though many had been the one-at-a-time

glass with which Mr. Jack Wild had consoled himself, yet so well had he managed to keep his counsel that Temperance was innocent of any suspicion of the truth, and had begun to look upon her admirer as the very double extract of honor. A happy man was Jack that morning at heart, though serious in countenance, as he mounted his horse to accompany the object of his tender regards to Belleharbor, whither her baggage had been sent earlier in the day in a horse-cart, and where she was to embark in the steam-boat for Baltimore; for though he was about to part with her whom, in the language of Mr. Obadiah Oldbuck, he might call his "beloved one," and, in the words of Mr. Jonathan Oldbuck, also his "fair foe," yet the necessity for a watchful secrecy in the enjoyment of his darling glass was becoming unbearably tiresome; the constant dread of discovery was annoying; and this necessity for concealment, this dread of discovery would no longer exist after that parting. Did Mr. Wild then prefer his glass to his lady-love? This is a difficult question. It is at least evident that he hoped by clever management to make the loss of one not necessary to the possession of the other.

Indisposition (a convenient word) prevented Miss Susan Wild from accompanying them in this ride. Their number, however, again amounted to three, the third individual upon the present occasion being a negro boy, who seemed the very personification of hardihood and endurance, for the number of severe castigations which it had been his lot to receive from "Marse Jack" had made him to a great degree insensible to their infliction. Dick was mounted upon a tall raw-boned animal, with a camel back, and Jack observed, with a happy facility at elegant illustration, that he furnished a picture which strongly assisted the fancy in realizing the appearance of "a monkey on a hay-stack."

No event occurred worthy of note until, when their ride was about half accomplished, they arrived at a little country store on the road-side. It seemed Jack's peculiar misfortune to expose his fondness for drink to his fair one when on horse-back. The motion, by increasing the circulation of the blood, perhaps created the desire for a stronger stimulus. However

this may be, he had for some time been ardently longing for a glass; and the opportunity that now offered to satisfy his thirst, with the sight of a tippling crony who stood in the store door, was entirely too much for the poor remains of his self-control. Hastily observing to Temperance that he saw a person to whom he wished to speak, and that if she would ride on slowly he would overtake her in a minute or two, he dismounted and entered the store.

If the reader should be skeptical as to the truth of this narrative, because the effect of the liquor drunk by Mr. Wild on this occasion was so different (as he will presently learn) from that described in a previous instance of the kind, he will reflect that that exemplary individual had already been detected in an endeavor to make intoxication "pass muster" as sickness, and that his next effort on a similar occasion might be, as likely as any other, to hide his ineptitude behind an exuberant flow of animal spirits. If another reason be required, it may be found in the difference of drinks. And here we may quote the authority of Jack Wild himself, who, having a "turn" for rhyming, has composed a descriptive couplet for almost every kind of intoxicating drink. Of the article drunk by him on a former occasion he says:

"A glass of brandy
Will make you unhandy."

And of that used in the present case,

"A glass of whisky
Will make you frisky."

If the reader, after receiving this authority, be yet unconvinced, he is hard to satisfy.

The first notice which Miss Woodruff had of Jack's approach after he had left the store, was from hearing him singing at the top of his voice,

" 'Oh, my love is like the red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June!
Oh, my love is like a melody,
That's sweetly played in tune!'"

A turn of the road brought him into view. On he came, reeling from side to side, and waving the hand which was free

from the bridle-rein, to and fro ; while his horse, frightened by the noise and galled by the spur, reared and plunged in an alarming way, with his head now to one side of the road, now to the other.

"For mercy's sake, Mr. Wild," cried the alarmed Temperance, "do not ride over me."

"Ride over *you* ! hurt *you* ! I wouldn't hurt you for the world," he exclaimed, as with a suddenly tightened rein he threw his horse upon his haunches, bringing him into such violent contact with the animal which Temperance rode, as nearly upset her and her steed together. "Fie, Temperance," he continued, "to think for a moment that I would hurt even a hair of her head whom I so devotedly love, and with whom I am, alas ! so soon to part." And again he sang,

"Then fare thee well, my only love,
And fare thee well awhile !
And I will come again, my dear,
Though 'twere *a hundred miles.*'"

"Mr. Wild," said the lady, "are you not ashamed to make such a noise?"

"I sing to express my love to you. Is there any harm in that?"

"But you need not sing so loudly."
"Why shouldn't I sing loudly ? I care not if the whole world knows my love for you," he exclaimed, waving his hand and arm so violently as nearly to lose his seat on horseback.
"I am not ashamed of you."

"But I am of you, sir ; and I assure you that if there be any love between us hereafter, it will be all on your side."

"Ah, Temperance ! how can you talk so when we are so soon to part?" And he sang again at the extent of his lungs,

"Here we meet too soon to part,
Here to leave will cause a smart,
Here I press thee to my heart,
Which long has loved thee dearly.'"

And, suiting the action to the words, he rode nearer and endeavored to place his arm around her.

"Hands off, sir!" she exclaimed, in alarm, fearful of being pulled from her horse; "touch me not."

"What!" he said, with a maudlin look of tender reproach, "do you deny me even one loving embrace, when we are so soon to part? Ah, cruel, cruel Temperance!"

"Call me not Temperance, sir. I had rather that you should not speak to me at all; but, if you will do so, my name to you hereafter is Miss Woodruff."

"Ah, indeed!" said Jack, vexed at this last severity; for, notwithstanding his drunkenness, he could not avoid some feeling of her contempt and disgust; "are you related to the celebrated individual whose name has that euphonious jingle in the spelling?

" 'W, double O, double D, E,
R, O, W, double F, E.' "

The lady made no reply to this brilliant sally, but, applying the whip to her horse, endeavored by dint of speed to rid herself of the gentleman's presence. Jack, determined not to be left, spurred his steed into a gallop also.

Not many yards in advance of them at this moment, a small brook crossed their way and lost itself in a marsh, or rather quagmire, to avoid which, the road, after passing the stream, turned abruptly to the right. On the side of the road occupied by Mr. Wild was a bank some three or four feet in height, which was separated from the marsh by the little stream. To this bank the young man's horse, when suddenly pressed by the spur, unfortunately directed his course, and to avoid the loss of distance consequent upon turning back into the road, the impatient rider, made reckless by the influence of drink, forced his fretted steed to leap the brook from this bank. On gaining the opposite side, however, Mr. Wild, instead of being as he had anticipated, comfortably seated upon his saddle, "found himself," to his inexpressible astonishment and disgust, almost to his waist in the quagmire; while the triumphant Temperance, merely casting a glance upon him as she passed, which satisfied her that his neck was not broken, continued her course at full gallop. His cries for assistance were totally unheeded by the fugitive lady; but when he called

upon Dick—who was following upon his tall and shadowy steed close in Miss Woodruff's wake—and threatened that if he did not immediately return to him, he would fay him alive the first time he laid his hands upon him, that considerate “colored individual” thought fit to check his horse's speed and to show some hesitation as to the propriety of continuing his journey. But Temperance, who feared to be left entirely without escort, reined in her horse for a moment, and, holding toward Dick a half-dollar between her thumb and forefinger, soon removed his scruples.

“Marse Jack will flog me any how 'bout his gettin' inter de mud,” he said to himself, as if to justify himself to his own conscience for leaving his master in such a predicament; “un I'd better git er wallopin' un er half-dollar den er wallopin' widout nothin' else. 'Sides, twone do fur ter let Miss Temperance go to Belleharbor all de ways by herse'f.”

And away went Miss Woodruff, followed by Dick, leaving the unfortunate Mr. Wild to extricate himself from his disagreeable and undignified situation, or not, as he might find it convenient.

After several ineffectual efforts to relieve himself from the “Slough of Despond” into which he had fallen, Jack resigned himself to what appeared to be his inevitable fate, and thus bemoaned his misfortunes :

“Oh, cruel and unfeeling Temperance! is this the return which my ardent affection receives from you, that you desert me when in a condition so pitiful and wretched? Merciless girl! have I thrown away my tender regards upon one so unnatural as you, who, when I called upon you by the love which you professed for me, and which you knew I bore to you (but which I will entertain no longer, for you are unworthy of the love of so true a heart), to render me assistance in my time of greatest need, would not vouchsafe to me one word, not even one look of commiseration! Alas!

“‘ She hears not, she cares not,
Nor will she list to me;
While here I lie, alone to die,
Beneath the willow-tree—’

this is

" Amid this quagmire-ree.

" And have all our vows of unchanging fidelity and undying love been pledged only to end in this—mud-hole? Cold, senseless, faithless, and traitorous as I now know you to be, if it were not for the fortune which they say you own, never again would I offer you the love of a heart of which this act of betrayal has proved you all unworthy.

" And what is to become of me, I wonder? Am I to perish thus? Am I to be cut off in the days of my youth and early promise? to see my existence, with all its bright hopes and brilliant prospects, terminate in a miserable mud-hole? And all because your unkindness and cruelty, unfeeling Temperance, would not extend to me a moment's help. Even Dick might have saved me had he wished to do so; but there is no more dependence to be placed in his gratitude than in your love. And to think of what I have done for that boy! how many switches I have worn out in trying to fit him for his station in life by making him obedient and serviceable! And to have all my kindness repaid in this manner! But as for him, if ever he comes within my reach again, I will make him repent his ingratitude the longest day he lives."

How much longer this soliloquy would have been continued it is impossible to say, as at this moment the disconsolate complainer was interrupted by another voice.

" Hello, young marster! What de marter? How you git here?"

The speaker was a gray-headed negro man of some fifty-five or sixty years, but still, to all appearance, strong and hearty. He held by the bridle Jack's horse, which he had caught as he came along the road. The gentleman in the quagmire regarded this person for a while in silence, and with a face that wore an expression of mauldin gravity, the comical effect of which was not a little heightened by the mud with which it was plentifully spattered. Then shaking his head slowly from side to side, with an air intended to express with how much sorrow and unwillingness he made the acknowledgment, he answered:

"Woman's faithlessness and perfidiousness, uncle—the faithlessness and perfidiousness of woman."

"Woman's faifiishness un pifflidilisness, marster?" exclaimed the old negro with a hearty laugh. "I golly! dat beats all I ever hearn talk on. Beg pardon, marster; lemme he'p you out."

With some difficulty Mr. Wild was released from his disagreeable confinement. A remarkable sight he presented, indeed, covered as he was with mud from head to foot.

"Uncle," he said to his rescuer, when he stood again upon dry ground, "I thank you for your kindness. That I may make you a return for it, let me beg you to take warning from my fate. Place not your trust in woman; for if you do your doom will be to see your youthful hopes blasted through her faithlessness. She will win the affections of your warm heart, and then desert you in your hour of need. Gaze not upon her melting smile, listen not to her voice of music. These are but toils spread out to capture, to lure your inexperience, and to ensnare you to your destruction. Let me beg of you, then, as you desire the fulfillment of your early prospects, put not your trust in woman."

"Lors, marster," said the old man, laughing, "I'se too ole fur dat now. Lemme brush some er de dirt off er you, un he'p you on to yo' horse."

Jack arrived home in safety. He never saw Miss Woodruff afterward, nor heard of her but once (although he had written to her he had received no answer but his own letter unopened), when, within a year after the incidents just related, a friend told him that he had seen a publication of her marriage in one of the daily papers. He still continues to indulge his favorite appetite; and, as he has long ceased to entertain any matrimonial hopes, the manner in which he usually expresses himself with regard to the fair sex strongly reminds his hearers of the fable of "The Fox and the Grapes."

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE FETE CHAMPETRE.

Uncle Jim's Instructions.—What's the Matter with Cousin Lucy?—A Sea-change.—Forward march!—The Oaks.—Mayhew and Family.—Making ready.—Mrs. Mayhew's impartial Judgment.—A pleasant Post.

I WAS awaked next morning by the sound of voices. The sun was just rising clear and cloudless. Through the open window came the soft air, made sweet by the mingled perfumes of flowers, and leaves, and grass. A dewy freshness pervaded all nature—the yard, the garden, the trees, the atmosphere. The windows of the room in which I slept opened, as before mentioned, on both the front and kitchen yards. From the latter came the voices that had aroused me from slumber. Uncle Jim was issuing his orders.

“Un den, you Ike—I say, boy, is you er list’nin’ ter me?”

“Sure I is; I hears ebery blessed word you’s er sayin’.”

“Den look like it den. Un den, I say, you un Jake take dem planks dat you hauled down tudde landin’ yesterdat ebenin’, un put um in de scow, un carry um down tudde mouf er de creek.”

“What mus’ I tell um ter do wid um den?”

“Neber you min’ dat; you jes’ do what I tells you. De planks is fur de table; Will un Meshach knows where mistiss wants um ter put um. Un den you turn right urround un bring dat scow back uggin’; Porringer’ll want it ter take down de house sarvunts un de purwissions. Un min’, boy, git back jes’ as soon as eber you kin. Un, Crowley, you go ober ter Marse Tom Sullivan’s, un axe him ter len’ us er boat, ef he kin spare one.”

“I’se got ter wait on de breakfus’ table, Uncle Jim,” expostulated Crowley.

“Wonner ef I don’ know,” said Uncle Jim, “what Marse John tole me? Ain’t ‘Possum ter take yo’ place, I wonner?

Un see dat you make has'e, too, un bring de batteau or coon'er, if you gits one, up tudde landin' in de right time."

The boys took the path leading to the creek, and Uncle Jim disappeared into the kitchen, whence were already issuing the sounds of preparation for an early breakfast.

As Cousin Walter was still sleeping soundly I would not disturb him, but made my morning toilette—donning white pantaloons and vest, and a black summer cloth coat—and descended to the parlor. Through a window I saw Cousin Lucy with a watering-can in her hand sprinkling the flowers in the front yard. She was waited on by Amanda, who had a bucket of water. Pushing aside the flowers and vines that shaded the window I put my head out.

"Good-morning, Cousin Lucy," I said.

"Good-morning, Cousin Clarence."

How sweet that voice sounded in the pure morning air! I had never noted before how much heart there was in it.

"I make the same request of you, cousin, which you made of Cousin Walter and me the other day, 'May I come out'—and help you?"

"Certainly," she answered; "you may come out if you wish, of course; but as to helping me I have almost finished this task."

Her voice did not seem to have its usual light-hearted tones; and I noticed, when I came out into the yard, that her face had a sad expression.

"What is the matter, Cousin?" I asked; "you do not appear to be as cheerful this morning as usual. And we have such a bright day before us, too."

"There is nothing the matter with me, Cousin Clarence," was the answer. Yet her eyes became suffused with tears.

"Pardon me, dear cousin," I said, "but something must be the matter, else why these tears?"

"I do not know," she answered, putting down the watering-can and running into the house.

Amanda also looked surprised at this, as she took up her bucket and went toward the kitchen-yard.

I knew not what to make of the matter. "Is it possible,"

I asked myself, "that my gentle Cousin Lucy is in fact high-tempered, and is now in a pet with some one—perhaps myself?" No, I could not have been mistaken in her as much as that. While I was still considering the matter I was joined by Cousin Walter and Lucas, both of whom were dressed in coarse linen suits, and wore roundabouts.

"Why, Clarence," said Cousin Walter, "do you intend to go fishing in that suit?"

"I do not think that I shall go fishing at all," I answered.

"Whether you do or not," he said, "you had better take our plan. Your dress will not be fit for dinner if you do not. Leave out the clothes you wish to dine and dance in," he added, as I started for up stairs to follow his advice, "and Porringer will take them down to the mouth of the creek, to be ready for you when you want them."

I had not quite finished changing my dress when I was called down to breakfast. I found them all seated at table; Mr. Travers, who had already arrived from St. Joseph's, among the rest. It was a very plain-looking party, so far as dress was concerned; the ladies being in dark calico, the gentlemen in brown linen. All were in a merry mood except Cousin Lucy; she seemed composed but not cheerful. Nobody appeared to notice her seriousness. Lizzie looked very brilliant, as usual; but I was not sorry that the seat kept for me was next to Cousin Lucy. Lizzie was happy and she was sad; and I sympathized with her sadness, though ignorant of its cause. She blushed with consciousness as I took my seat by her side.

"You are late, Clarence," said Uncle Weatherby. "You see that, being in a hurry, we are waiting for you 'as fast as we can.'"

"Clarence was up betimes," said Cousin Walter, before I could speak, "but had dressed himself too finely for fishing, and, at my inducement, returned up stairs to

"'Suffer a *sea-change*.'"

Almost immediately after breakfast we all started for the creek, the following being the order of our march. First went

uncle, Aunt Mary, and Mr. Travers; then Lizzie, escorted by Cousin Walter and Mr. Lucas; Cousin Lucy, Cousin Jack, and I brought up the rear. Cousin Lucy became more cheerful every moment, and at length took a part in the merry talk kept up by Jack and myself; and before we arrived at the creek was herself again. We found a batteau in very clean condition, and manned by two negro oarsmen, awaiting us at the landing, and were soon rowed down to the oak grove at the mouth of the creek.

No more beautiful and appropriate spot could have been selected for a festive purpose. It was a level piece of ground three or four acres in extent, and elevated five or six feet above the tide, covered by closely-trimmed greensward, and shaded by stately old oaks. On the south side it faced the creek; on the west it was bordered by one of those channels before spoken of as uniting the creek and river, and which was separated from the latter by a long and low islet. On the sides toward the water this plateau sloped by an easy gradation to the shore. A few hundred yards up the creek was an abundant spring of clear and pure water.

We found Mayhew awaiting us at the shore. A stout and rather good-looking woman of about thirty years old, and a tall, sinewy lad of about ten or twelve years of age, with yellow hair and sunburnt cheeks, stood near to him. Himself and the boy were dressed in coarse brown linen lately washed, yet marked by such stains as fishermen must wear: the only difference in their costumes was that the man wore a coarse straw hat and the boy a tarpaulin one. The woman shone in a new and bright-colored calico dress and sun-bonnet of the same material. She seemed a little abashed at being gayer in appearance than the ladies of our party.

"Your sarvunt, ladies and gentlemen," said Mayhew, touching his hat, which salutation was returned by all, I alone touching my hat. "Mrs. Weatherby, madam, I brung my wife along with me; I thought she mought be some help to you."

Mrs. Mayhew dropped a "curchy."

"I am much obliged to you and her both, Mr. Mayhew,"

said Aunt Mary, as she shook hands with the oyster-guard's wife. "Mrs. Mayhew, are you acquainted with Miss Lizzie Dalton?"

"No, ma'am," was the answer; "but I've seed her sometimes at meetin', and I've hearn talk of her often."

Lizzie came forward and was introduced, and then the female part of the company went to look after their share of the arrangements. Mayhew was introduced to Mr. Lucas; he already knew Mr. Travers.

"Have you fished the weir yet, Mayhew?" asked uncle.

"Yes, sir; Tom and me got up very airly, and went right smack off the reel to fish the weir. Got the fish in the 'live-boat under the bank in the channel; thought 'twas best to keep 'em frsh."

"What luck?"

"Any quantity of young rock, and crocus, and pearch, and right smart of other kinds too."

"That's good luck," said uncle.

"As I comed down the creek," continued Mayhew, "I brung in my cooner some of the creek isheters that I tuck away from that Eastern Shore varmunt t'other day."

"I am much obliged to you," said uncle; "it was well thought of; it is not often that you can get creek oysters at this season of the year, the water not being so clear as in winter. Jim told me that it was too muddy to get them yesterday."

"What is the reason?" asked Travers, "that the wnter is not so clear in summer as in winter?"

"It is supposed to be caused," answered Cousin Walter, "by the motion of the fish and eels keeping the mud at the bottom stirred. They are torpid in winter, you know."

Looking over the islets in the mouth of the creek, we saw some negro boys chasing crabs in the Channels, and a couple of negro men at work in a canoe on an oyster-bar out in the river flats. The crab-catchers seemed to be having a merry time. Sometimes a sudden shriek, followed by mingled laughter and tones of complaint, showed that the "channelers" had occasionally an opportunity of taking vengeance for their capture.

"Who feels disposed," asked Travers, "to have a frolic with the crabs? 'Tis sometimes pleasant to be a boy again for a while. What do you say to it, Weatherby?"

"There are a couple of camp-meeting tents," answered Cousin Walter, "which Major Sullivan borrowed for us, to be put up, one for the ladies and the other for the gentlemen to make their toilets in. I think that I had better stay to see to their being put up right; I doubt whether the negroes will understand."

"Come, Lucas," said Travers, "lay aside your professional dignity for an hour, and let us have some 'fun,' as Jack would call it; and, Audley, renew the sports of your childhood."

I excused myself on the ground that Aunt Mary probably had employment for me. Lucas, after some demur, consented to go on being assured that, if he were not back in time, should any of the ladies desire to go on a fishing excursion, he should be "called for" by the voice or the boat. So Travers, Lucas, and Cousin Jack sprang into one of the canoes, of which there were several moored to the bank, and pushed off for the Channels.

Uncle had already gone off with Mayhew to look at the oysters and fish. Cousin Walter and I joined the ladies. They were employed, with the assistance of Amanda and one or two other negro girls, in ornamenting with bunches of flowers and festoons of vines the long and rough table which Will and Meshach had made. This table, which stood about fifty yards from the shore of the creek, and about half that distance from the nearest channel, was formed of pine planks laid upon sticks of wood that were supported at each end by pronged stanchions driven into the ground. A line of single boards supported in the same manner along each side of the table, and at a proper height from the ground, was intended to furnish seats for the guests. The two old negro men were now overhauling the tents, and Aunt Jinny, with two or three female aids of her own color, was busily engaged arranging pots and kettles, skillets and frying-pans, dishes and plates, knives and forks, and all the *et ceteras* belonging to the eating department.

We found the ladies all in pleasurable excitement—Aunt Mary herself as merry as a young girl—and every now and then, in the midst of their gay chat and laughter, discussing with affected warmth some question of taste. As Mrs. Mayhew alone originated no opinion, every body appealed to her decision, and she, confused and yet delighted at being called upon to act as umpire, tried her best to decide in favor of every body.

"I agrees with you, ma'am," she said to Aunt Mary, "that flowers and wines hung in a double line of fish-tongs, as you calls 'em, over the middle of the table will look beautiful. Then, as Miss Lizzie says, I thinks ef they was hung cross-ways in fish-tongs, with a line of fish-tongs down the middle jining 'em—that would be very purty too. And as to the primmidges of flowers on the table, I thinks, as you says, that it would be very purty indeed for the colors to git deeper from the bottom to the top; and it would be very sweet and delicate-like, too, that they should come paler and paler as you goes up, as Miss Lucy says; but, arter all, no doubt but what ef the colors was mixed nicely, as Miss Lizzie purposhes, that they would look beautiful."

Cousin Walter and I stood looking on and listening for a while, and enjoying the scene greatly.

"Come, young men," said Aunt Mary at length, in a merry voice, "why do you not bestir yourselves, instead of standing there idly laughing at us industrious people? Walter, had you not better be looking after the tents? I fear Will and Meshach know but little of such matters. As for you, Clarence, jump upon the table, and reach that limb for Lizzie to fasten the rope of flowers to which she has in her hand."

So Cousin-Walter and myself both soon had our hands full of business. My task of helping the ladies was decidedly the most agreeable, and I often made mistakes intentionally, that I might have the pleasure of receiving the light blows bestowed by their soft hands on cheeks and shoulders for my dullness, and which were as freely as merrily given in the *abandon* of the occasion. Notwithstanding our work's being made a frolic of, it proceeded both tastefully and expeditiously—too expe-

ditiously for my satisfaction, indeed. The table, when our pleasant labor was finished, looked beautiful—even without the more substantial ornaments which were yet to be placed upon it—with its white muslin cloths, its bouquets, and wreaths. By the time that our task was completed the tents were pitched, and the ladies with their colored *aids-de-camp* proceeded to fit up the interiors of them. Cousin Walter and I were not allowed to aid them in this.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE CHANNELS AND THE SHORE.

The Company arriving.—A Cruise in the Channels.—Maninos.—Possum's Stratagem and Crowley's Revenge.—Lucas and Travers "in for it."—Sly Jack.—Greetings.—A Cry for Help.—The Rescue.

SHORTLY afterward the expected company began to make their appearance; some in carriages, on horseback, and on foot, from the landward side; others in canoes and batteaux by the water. A number of fishing-boats were fastened to stakes out upon the river flats; and, from the way in which their occupants handled their angles, the indications were that all the fish caught would not be eaten that day. Besides the plentiful dinner and the merry holiday, another inducement which drew to the grove a large number of the poorer class, with their wives and children, was the fish and other unused edibles which they expected to take home with them. Thus, as the holiday would be to them, instead of a loss of time, a gain in substance, there was no drawback to their enjoyment of it. Dear Uncle Weatherby! how full he was with the happiness which he was conferring upon others. Cousin Walter and I found him, with a face glowing with smiles, doing his best to shake hands with and welcome every body, "high and low, rich and poor."

"Come, boys," he said, "you must help me and do some of the talking with my friends and neighbors. But first, Clarence, tell your aunt Mary that the ladies are coming. And

(by-the-by, I am afraid that I shall have to let you off from helping to receive our guests, as the girls may require your services) tell Lizzie and Lucy that, if they wish to go fishing, it is 'high time' for them to be off to the Flats."

The ladies had just concluded arranging matters inside the tents when I called on them. Aunt Mary, after giving a few orders to the servants, hastened to receive the female guests. The young ladies felt no disposition to go fishing, but agreed to make an exploring expedition into the Channels. I selected for them the lightest and cleanest canoe among those fastened to the beach.

Paddling the canoe along the shore of the islet bordering the nearest channel, I soon turned the point at the southern extremity of this little island. Here, passing by the manino shoals that lie upon the eastern and inner side of the group of islets at the mouth of the creek, we found Uncle Porringer and a negro boy digging up the maninos with a broad shovel. As most of my readers are probably unacquainted with this shell-fish, I append a short description of it.

The manino (called by most of the people in Chittering Neck the "man-nose") is about the size of a muscle, and, like it, has a thin shell. Through an opening in one end of this shell projects a snout resembling that of the male turkey. It is found imbedded in the sand a few inches below the surface, and may be dug out when the tide is low. The flesh of the manino is softer and fatter than that of the oyster—which it somewhat resembles in flavor—and is generally considered a great delicacy by those who are epicurean in taste.

Pursuing our voyage, we entered a small channel which was separated from a larger one by the low point of an islet covered with dwarf cedar-trees. Our course was here arrested by something which was presented to our sight in the channel beyond these trees. The scene explained itself. 'Possum —as we learned subsequently—had persuaded Crowley that he saw a large channel crab directly in the current of the channel, where, as the tide was still on the ebb, sea-nettles were yet numerous; and the consequence had been that Crowley, following the treacherous suggestion, had been severely

stung. The scene which we witnessed was the retort to this: 'Possum had caught a channeler, and before he had time to spansel him (which operation is performed by sticking the point of each fore fin into the last joint of the opposite claw), he saw another which he had given chase to and had succeeded in getting under the prongs of his crab-stick. Placing his left hand, in which he held by the back fins the crab first caught, upon the top of the stick to hold it firmly, he stooped down to take up carefully with his other hand his new captive, keeping his head at a respectful distance from his left hand. We caught Crowley in the very act of pushing the stick nearer to 'Possum's head; and the next instant the unfortunate 'Possum lost all thought of the pomposity of manner with which he even caught crabs, and bellowed lustily for help, the crab having clinched him by the ear. I called to Crowley to release him immediately. The crab would not let go, and the claw had to be broken off. Poetical justice was done upon Crowley too; for, in his confusion at being detected, he had been too hasty in handling the crab, and the other claw had to be broken from his own hand. Altogether it was a noisy affair; and even the pain which the young negroes suffered did not prevent it from being ludicrous. Travers and Lucas, who were at a little distance, armed with crab-sticks too, laughed unrestrainedly. They themselves, however, suffered the next moment.

They had heard my voice when I called to Crowley, but were not able, on account of the intervening bushes, to see whom I had in the canoe with me. As soon as we came out from the shelter of the dwarf cedars and they saw that there were ladies on board, they turned to seek their own boat; for their appearance was not by any means dignified, their pantaloons being rolled up to the knee and their feet naked. Their boots and stockings were in their canoe, which, unfortunately for them, had disappeared—from them, that is, but not from those in our boat. We saw Cousin Jack paddling it away as fast as he could down a neighboring channel. I called to him to stop; but, of course, he was very deaf indeed, being determined not to hear.

"Hallo, Audley," shouted Travers, "do not come any nearer, I beg of you; but go, if you please, and make that young rascal bring that canoe back. He has our boots *and so forth* with him."

"If you do not go away forthwith," added Lucas—"begging pardon of the ladies for desiring their absence—we shall be forced to hide ourselves in the water; and then you will make each of us a *felo de se* in law Latin, as well as a fellow *de sea* in mixed English."

"And in *plain* English," I said, "*a fellow deceased.*"

Of course we disappeared from their sight as soon as possible, and, at the request of the ladies—preferred because the day was growing much warmer—returned to the oak grove. Cousin Jack was leisurely landing the crabs from his canoe, assisted by several boys, his school-fellows, to whom I felt assured, from their merriment, he was recounting the joke which he had played upon his boat-mates. *

"Jack," I asked, "why did you run away with that boat at such a moment?"

"I came, cousin, to bring a load of crabs," he answered, "and shall return as soon as they are taken from the boat." Then looking into my face, the expression which he saw there encouraged him to add, "Did they look very funny, Cousin Clarence? I should like to have seen them."

I thought it a very pardonable joke, and, after relating the incident to Cousin Walter, remarked that it was queer that Travers and Lucas, who were willing to go into the water, should object to being *sea in* (seen).

"A wretched effort at punning, Clarence," he said, after a hearty laugh, however, "and most amusing on that account. So the world laughs at misery."

It was a lively scene which was presented to us on our return to the grove. Quite a large crowd was collected of old men and old women, young men and young women, boys and girls, rich and poor, white and black. Some were gathered in groups in the shade, standing, or sitting upon the benches of a single board hastily constructed here and there in the shade: others were promenading under the trees. The sounds of

grave conversation and of merry laughter were mingled on all sides. Boats of various kinds lined the shores—for the increasing heat of the day had driven in the fishing parties—and carriages and horses, and carts and wagons were grouped in the back-ground.

We had advanced but a short distance from the shore when we met almost all my acquaintances of the past few days. There were Mrs. Wilton, her daughters, and Miss King; Mrs. Dalton and Willie; and Major Sullivan and his nieces. Cousin Walter was in conversation with Miss Susan. Mrs. Wilton met me in her usual frank and hearty manner; and Mrs. Dalton received my greeting with the polite stateliness of the day before. The old major was the same uproarious old fellow.

"Hallo, you young Audley," he said, as I approached, escorting Lizzie and Cousin Lucy, "at your old tricks again, I see, sir. I say, young man, is it possible that you do not understand how silly it is for you to dream of Lizzie any longer, when she has promised to dance the first cotillon with me? And I see here is my friend Morton—I will not say '*my old friend*'—who is just as thoughtless in that respect as you are, young Audley."

Mr. Morton advanced with unbending stateliness and addressed us all with formal courtesy. He was dressed as exquisitely as he had been at the Thursday evening party; he never yielded an inch to circumstances in the article of dress. As soon as politeness to others allowed, he attached himself to Lizzie and her mother; and I soon saw the three forming a detached group.

While exchanging a few pleasant remarks with those around me, I was called by Uncle Weatherby, who was standing at a little distance with Mr. Worthington. My acquaintance of the packet-boat received me with a cordial grasp of the hand.

"Mr. Worthington was just inquiring for you, Clarence," said uncle.

"I wished to ask you," said Mr. Worthington, "to go home with me to-night and spend the day with me to-morrow. We will go to church together in the morning."

"I should be so glad," I answered, "to accept your kind

invitation under other circumstances, that I was on the point of saying I *regret* that I have an engagement to accompany a young lady to church, and after to Mrs. Macgregor's."

"Lizzie Dalton?" asked uncle.

"Yes, sir," I answered, with a blush.

"Well, sir," said Mr. Worthington, after a short pause, "if you do not soon come to see me, I shall make haste to visit you."

"Stay with us to-night, Worthington," said uncle. "You can go to church from my house to-morrow."

"I accept your invitation with pleasure," answered Mr. Worthington. "Mr. Audley, do you still feel any desire to converse on the subject of which we were speaking on board of the packet?"

"Much," I replied. "I have not forgotten your promise to give me light."

The reader is aware that another subject had almost absorbed my attention for the last few days.

At this moment our conversation was interrupted by the sound of a plunge into the water, near to which we were standing, followed instantly by a startling shriek, which was immediately echoed by others. But amid them all I heard a beloved voice calling upon me:

"Clarence, dear Clarence, save my brother—save our Willie!"

And to call upon me alone among so many! The quick conviction of the faith that must at such a moment have inspired the appeal, gave me an energy which I felt as irresistible. Who should dare to come to the rescue but myself?

Little Willie Dalton had been playing with his young nurse in one of the canoes fastened to the shore—whither she had thoughtlessly taken him—and had fallen overboard at the end of the boat where the water was deep.

The appeal to me for help had, I suppose, acted as a momentary check upon others, by directing their attention to me. Without an instant's hesitation, and without removing even my roundabout, but throwing off my hat, I sped to the shore, and, springing into the boat, rushed to its farther end. Dim-

ly far down in the water I saw the child's white dress (how fortunate that his dress was white !), and plunged after it. He had fallen overboard backward, and had so sunk into the water ; and, as I opened my arms to grasp him when I thought that I was at the right depth, he, having his outspread arms toward me, first felt my neck ; and, as the drowning instinctively catch hold of whatever touches them, he clasped me there. Thus his position impeded the free use of my arms, and his grasp was so tight as to make my breathing difficult. When I arose to the surface I was, of course, much farther from the shore than when I dived. Still the distance was but short ; and the hope held out by this circumstance—which made the husbanding of my strength not necessary—nerved me with unusual power for the moment. Clasping the child firmly with my left hand, and forcing his head as much as I could—with his arms wound tightly around my neck—above my shoulder upon that side, for the purpose of keeping his face above water, I pushed forward my right arm, and, inclining as much as possible to that side to cause the other to be higher, I pressed toward the shore. This was done almost blindly ; for the position of the child, keeping my head too low, caused not only my mouth, but my eyes, frequently to be under water. So rapidly did all this take place that, before those who saw the difficulty with which I had to contend could even unmoor a boat to come to my assistance, I felt my feet touch the ground. Whether it was the exhaustion resulting from such an unusual effort, or the excitement of mind, I can not tell ; but no sooner had I, on gaining the shore, placed the rescued Willie, all wet and drooping, in the arms of the nearest person —his mother—than the old disease of my childhood overcame me, and, staggering a step or two, I fell and fainted.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

UNDER THE OAKS.

Return to Consciousness.—“Ministering Angels.”—Mrs. Dalton.—Groups and Stragglers.—Porringer’s Blast.—Dinner.—Major Sullivan and Dr. Jackson.—How Miley Sussex was *taken for* his brother Tom.—Mr. Jarboe and Law Language.

WHEN I recovered consciousness, my head was resting in Aunt Mary’s lap, who was seated on the grass, and Cousin Lucy was bending over me with my hand clasped in hers. A cool wind, as if from a fan, came over me from some unseen source; yet my first sense of returning feeling was caused by the warm tears, which so contrasted with the cold water in which I was drenched, falling upon my cheeks from the sweet eyes of my gentle cousin. I can never forget the expression of those dear faces as then impressed upon my memory—so kind and pitying, so tenderly affectionate.

A crowd was gathered around me, in front of whom stood uncle and Cousin Walter looking intently on my face. Almost directly in front of me was Mr. Morton; his face wore a sad and rather stern expression. Miss King was leaning on his arm; she was speaking to him with something very much like a sneer on her lip, and watching his face as if to note the effect of her words upon him.

“Stand back, if you please, ladies and gentlemen,” uncle was saying, “and give him air; he is reviving. Where is Porringer?”

“Here, marster,” responded a voice behind me.

“Where are your materials for making drink?”

“Got um under de table, sir; ebery thing dat’s wanten fur makin’ juleps, hail-storms, punch, cobblers, un sangaree.”

“Walter,” said uncle, “you had better get Clarence a glass of brandy and water; I am sure it will be of service to him.”

“I think,” answered Cousin Walter, “that we had better get him into the gentlemen’s tent and change his dress as soon as possible.”

"A glass of brandy," said uncle, "will soon give him strength enough to go there."

Cousin Walter went for the drink.

I looked around over the faces before me in vain to find one the most beloved—I was yet too weak to turn my head easily. Then it occurred to me that Lizzie was, of course, attending on her brother.

"Where is the child?" I asked, in a low tone. They were the first words I spoke.

"In the ladies' tent with mother," spoke a low, sweet voice near to my ear (Lizzie had been fanning me, but I could not see her face at first), "and safe, thanks to you, dear, dear Clarence. He is now doing well. I just this instant came, by mother's direction, to see how you were."

My heart told me what had brought her so soon. "The time will come, sweet Lizzie," I thought, "when we may without impropriety show our feelings toward each other anywhere."

The glass of brandy and water soon enabled me to go to the gentlemen's tent without help. There I took off my dripping clothes and put on the dress which I had donned earlier in the morning. When I came forth again, a slight paleness of face was all that in my appearance indicated my having fainted. I felt almost as strong as before the incident occurred; only a slight languor remained, and even that soon left me.

When I made my appearance every body I met congratulated me for what I had done. This became very unpleasant; fortunately it necessarily had an end. We like to be praised when we do not feel assured that our act is a good one; the favorable opinions of others help to settle our doubts. But when we know that we have done a deed of unselfishness, one of great service to, or conferring happiness upon, a human being, praise is not pleasant to us.

I was standing in a group with Cousin Walter, Cousin Lucy, and Miss Susan Sullivan, under the shade of a large oak, when Mrs. Rachel Dalton came out of the ladies' tent with her little son in her arms and Lizzie by her side. She stopped, apparently to make inquiry of a person whom she met and who

spoke in return, looking in my direction—and then came on to where I stood. How my heart beat as she approached! Her stateliness and formality were all gone. Such persons, when once moved, are apt to go farther than others; the ice of their external manner often covers a Hecla of feeling. In too many instances, however, their outpourings of feeling are, like the eruptions of the volcano, spasmodic and temporary. To my astonishment, having placed her son upon the ground, she put her arms around my neck and kissed me on the cheek.

"My dear, noble Clarence," she said, and tears were in her eyes, "you have saved the life of my only son; and I owe you more than I can express in words. Your generous heart can understand, my dear son, what I can not say. But remember that I am forever indebted to you."

"You overwhelm me by talking so, my dear Mrs. Dalton," I replied; "I am more than repaid already—it is such happiness to be of service to you; and there are so many here who would have readily done what I did. It was only my good fortune."

She raised her son from the ground and held his mouth to mine. The little fellow looked pale but very pretty and sweet.

"Kiss your friend, Willie," she said; and the child obeyed her. "You must love this gentleman—he has saved your life."

"I do lub him, ma," answered the child; "he give me money yisserday."

He was too young to understand the importance to him of what had occurred; but even very young children can appreciate a gift.

"I should say," said Mrs. Dalton, with a smile mingling with the tears in her eyes, "kiss Lizzie too, but for the crowd."

Lizzie blushed with consciousness; doubtlessly she remembered an incident that had occurred the day before on the shore of Crystal Cove.

"I am sure," she said, giving me her hand, "that Clarence knows how much *I* thank him."

"Thanks are burdensome," I whispered, "where given for a service rendered to you, dear Lizzie." And I kissed her hand before I surrendered it.

As it was approaching the dinner-hour, Lizzie and Lucy retired to the ladies' tent to change their dresses; Mrs. Dalton and Willie accompanied them. Miss Susan Sullivan and Cousin Walter strayed to the Channel-shore; they were both already dressed for dinner.

I had seen Morton standing, during this interview, at a short distance with Major Sullivan and Mr. Worthington, and had remarked that he frequently cast lowering glances in my direction. After the ladies and Cousin Walter retired, the old major and my acquaintance of the packet-boat joined me; and Mr. Morton conveyed himself to another party farther off. I saw Travers and Lucas sitting on a bench near the creek-shore with Miss Jane Dalton and Miss Teresa King; they seemed to be engaged in a sprightly conversation. All of this party, also, had donned their gayer habiliments (this by way of parenthesis). I had some time before suspected that Travers had a penchant for Miss Jane; and Lucas, I think, had discovered that Miss King was an heiress. The occasion, indeed, was a good one for discovering preferences of this kind. Every now and then couples might be noted straying off alone to seat themselves on a green bank by the creek or Channel side, or upon a bench, or upon the fallen trunk of a tree, or upon the gnarled root of some old oak, apart from the rest of the company: or else they were seen slowly promenading by themselves to and fro under the shade.

All the neighboring woods and fields and the shores of the creeks and channels and rivers were alive with straggling parties of young people; and frequent bursts of laughter afforded an evidence of the general enjoyment. Some of the company had strayed so far that Uncle Weatherby directed Porringer to blow a recall on a hunting-horn about half an hour previous to dinner. When this recall had been sounded—for an unnecessarily long time, by-the-by; for Porringer liked the *quasi* importance which it gave to him—and the crowd in obedience to it had gathered upon the green, it was apparent that Uncle

Weatherby's invitation, even at so short a notice, had drawn together a large throng of people. The number of negro servants, who were present to wait upon their owners or their owners' families, was not small; those of them who were employed in their duties were mingled in among the white visitors; those who were off duty were for the most part gathered in the neighborhood of Aunt Jinny's kitchen department.

"Weatherby will ruin himself some of these days, I am afraid, by this unbounded hospitality," said the major, who had a very direct way of speaking.

"Hospitality and liberality," observed Mr. Worthington, with a glance toward me, "are hereditary propensities of the Weatherby family. They never seem to enjoy any thing unless shared with others."

"True, true," said the major, hastily; "they have always been a noble set of fellows; and as for ruin, Weatherby's fortune is large. By the way—speaking of sharing enjoyments—what do you say to a sherry-cobbler this warm day?"

Mr. Worthington assented. As I saw Mrs. Dalton with Willie by the hand, and Lizzie, and Cousin Lucy coming that moment out of the ladies' tent, I excused myself, and when the old gentlemen took themselves off, hastened to meet those ladies. On the way I fell in with Cousin Walter and Miss Susan Sullivan, and, in company with them, joined Mrs. Dalton's party. Almost immediately afterward Uncle Porringer was heard loudly announcing dinner, and the cry, taken up here and there by other voices, rang through the grove, gathering toward one point stragglers from all quarters. As the crowd began to pass on by us toward the dinner-table, Cousin Walter offered his arms to Lizzie and Miss Susan; I presented mine to Mrs. Dalton and Cousin Lucy, and, Willie being taken charge of by his nurse, who was strictly enjoined to keep always within sight and call of her mistress, we fell into the ranks of the procession moving tableward.

The dinner-table did credit to the ladies who had had charge of its preparation. It was *tastefully* arranged in both senses, being not only inviting to the palate but beautiful to the sight. Besides all that the water afforded, cooked in ev-

ery known manner, was every seasonable article of food from the land. The cooking was excellent; Aunt Jinny and her assistants won universal applause. As the company was very large the children and a number of grown people had to wait for a second and even a third table. Though knives, forks, dishes, and plates had been contributed by several neighbors, there were not enough of these articles for all the company at once.

Major Sullivan, Travers, Lucas, Miss Jane Wilton, Miss Teresa King, and Miss Bettie Sullivan occupied seats at the table opposite to us. Dr. Turner, a stout and fine-looking gentleman of thirty years, sat next to Miss Bettie, who was on her uncle's right hand; the major introduced me to him.

The viands were apparently done justice to by every body, yet merry conversation and laughter mingled their sounds with the clatter of knives and forks. The negro servants who attended on the table seemed to enjoy the scene as much as those on whom they waited. When those at our part of the table had been satisfied with the more substantial food, and were about to make an assault upon the plain dessert of different fruit-pies, Dr. Hiram L. Jackson, whose habit it was to be late on all occasions, as it gave him the appearance of having an active practice, passed by us in search of a seat. He had still the high shirt-collar and the generally starched appearance of former times. He stopped an instant to look among us for a vacant place, but seeing the old major, he suddenly started away. The major made his shot, however.

"Hallo, doctor!" he called out; "how is the health of the people in your neighborhood?"

Even in his alarm Jackson did not forget his stilts.

"Too excruciatingly salubrious, major," he replied, turning around, "for the interests of a professional practitioner."

He then passed on without more delay, having furnished Travers the theme for what would probably have been, but for its sudden interruption, a very learned discourse on the proper application of words.

"The word 'salubrious,'" said Mr. Travers, "can never be correctly used in reference to persons; it properly applies in a

general way to the climate of a place, and perhaps in a special way to the condition of the atmosphere of a place at a certain or specified period. The term ‘professional practitioner’ is too general ; it will apply as well to the practitioner of any other profession as to the practitioner of medicine. One should never undertake to use learned expressions, as this ridiculous Dr. Jackson does, unless well assured of the meaning of his words. Such a habit may lead to singular mistakes. For instance—”

“Speaking of singular mistakes,” interrupted the major—“young Audley, do you see that stout individual down the table there, the next below Morton ? Every body here but you knows the twin Sussexes.”

“I see him,” I answered : “quite a jolly-looking face he has.”

“That is either Miley Sussex,” continued the major, “or his brother Tom, I do not know which. I will tell you, ladies and gentlemen, something that happened to Miley not many weeks ago, and, as I always like to give a name to a story when I tell it, I shall call this ‘How Miley Sussex was taken for his brother Tom.’

“Miley and his brother Tom, as you know, are twins, and they are so much alike that, as an Irishman would say, you can’t tell them apart unless you see them together. They are both very fond of drink, but in the matter of courage they are very different, Tom being quite a brave fellow and Miley an arrant coward. Ask Miley himself, and he will tell you so, for his cowardice has been proved on so many occasions that he no longer even attempts to conceal it. At a political meeting in St. Joc’s one afternoon—in last July, I think it was—where both the brothers were present, Tom Sussex got into a quarrel with one of the other party, which of course, as the disputants were drunk, led to a fight, in which Tom succeeded in giving his adversary a severe beating. The sufferer hastened to get a writ issued against him for assault and battery. The case comes on next term of court, does it not, Lucas ?”

“Yes,” answered the lawyer ; “I am counsel for Sussex.”

"I congratulate you," said the major, "and hope that you will get him off. 'Tis rather hard, I think, that a man can not get into a little innocent fight without being hauled up before court for it."

Some protests were entered against this doctrine of the major's.

"Never mind now," he said; "we'll talk about that another time. Well, Tom having the fear of the law before him, hastened homeward. In the mean time, Miley had been so overcome by liquor, that he had been taken away by a friend of his, a citizen of the village, and put to bed. By the next morning he had slept off his drunkenness, but was rather oblivious of all that had occurred during the previous evening. He was sitting in the porch of his friend's house after breakfast, when Jarboe—the subordinate executive functionary of the law, as Dr. Jackson would say—came up and tapped him on the shoulder.

"'Mr. Sussex,' said the pompous constable, 'you're my prisoner, sir; I arrest you in the name of the State of Merryling.'

"'Prisoner!' exclaimed Miley, much alarmed. 'Nobody has any judgment against me.'

"'Taint no *fiery faces*, sir,' said Jarboe, glad to have an occasion for displaying his legal learning, 'and 'taint no *casc-A.* 'Tis a state's warrant, a warrant of the State of Merryling, sir, for that whereas you, the aforesaid, on such a day and so forth, in the said county aforesaid, did then and there commit an assault and battery upon the body of the said Samuel Brown or Brown Samuel aforesaid, as the case may be; and did then and there—that is to say—cut, wound, bruise, knock down, beat, and pummel him, the aforesaid Samuel, or the aforesaid Samuel Brown, as aforesaid, with divers and sundries, to wit: knives, forks, pistols, dirks, swords, guns—'"

"That is not the language of a writ," said Lucas, with an expression of contempt. "I flatter it when I say that it sounds like a very insane attempt at a burlesque upon an indictment."

"I am only telling you what Jarboe said," answered the major, laughing heartily at seeing that his bolt had told.

"But you are forgetting about Miley, major," suggested Cousin Walter.

"Miley," resumed the major, "interrupted Jarboe about where Lucas interrupted me."

"Perhaps a little sooner?" insinuated Lucas.

"I think you are right," said the major, with a quiet twinkle in his eye. "Samuel Brown, the most of you know, is quite a famous bully."

"Did I beat Sam Brown, Jarboe?" asked Miley, in delightful excitement; for the legal results he did not consider as worthy a thought in the glory of having defeated somebody in a fight, and that somebody a noted bully.

"So saies the writ," answered Jarboe. "But, come, Mr. Sussex, we must enter our appearance before the justus, sir, according to the requiernunts of the law and the axe of 'semblies' in such case made and purvided."

There was a quiet twinkle in the major's eyes again, as he cast a sly glance at Lucas. The eyes of the young lawyer flashed up a moment, but he controlled himself.

"The magistrate lived at the far end of the village," continued the major; "and, on their way to his house, Miley, in great pride at his supposed achievement, stopped all whom he met to inform them that the constable was taking him before the 'squire for beating Sam Brown."

"I was one of those whom he met," interposed Dr. Turner. "'Hallo, doc,' he said, speaking with unusual familiarity in his excitement, 'I am taken up for beating Sam Brown, the biggest bully in the district. What do you think of that? I guess you won't find any of these fighting boys crowding over me again.'"

"Of course," resumed the major, "as soon as the magistrate read the charge as against Thomas Sussex, Miley discovered the mistake. His chagrin was equal to his previous delight.

"My name is Miles, not Thomas," he said, much chap-fallen.

"'You must prove that,' said the justice of the peace. 'How do we know, Mr. Sussex, but that this is an attempt to get out of the hands of the law. On my responsibility as a man merely, sir, I believe you; but as a magistrate, I must have proof.'

"The prisoner's friend was soon produced, and established Miley's identity, and that he was in bed at his—the neighbor's—house, when the fight occurred."

By the time that the major's story was concluded, the company at the table had considerably thinned; and, the ladies near us making a movement, we all arose.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ALMOST A DUEL.

An Invitation declined.—The green-eyed Monster.—Miss Lizzie Dalton's Ruse.—The Insult.—Pistols for two.—The Apology.

SOME time after we had left the table, and as the third company was sitting down to dinner—they did not occupy more than half the table—and while I was seated on a bench in the shade of a large oak with Lizzie and Miss Bettie Sullivan, Porringer came to me with a message from uncle.

"Young marster," said the old negro, taking off his hat and making a low bow, "Marse John says will you jine er party uv gentlum dat's jest er gwine ter set down at de upper eend uv de table, sah?"

"Tell uncle," I answered, "that I have two good reasons for declining his invitation—I am not accustomed to drinking, and I prefer the company of these ladies."

"Dat las' is a very good reason, young marster," said Porringer, bowing very low to the ladies. "Didden' I tell you so, Marse Clarence," he added in a pretended whisper, "las' Wensdy mornin', on de shore uv Sin Joseph's Creek?"

"What was it he told you, Clarence?" asked Lizzie, when the old negro had gone.

"He warned me," I answered, "that there was a 'heap'—as he expressed it—of handsome young ladies in Chittering Neck. He has no right to claim the credit of being a prophet for having said that. But, ladies, pardon my forgetfulness—will you have a glass of lemonade, or will you venture on a cobbler?"

They preferred the lemonade. As I was crossing the grove to order it, with a cobbler for myself, my face no doubt bright with animation and pleasant excitement, I met Mr. Morton.

"You seem to be enjoying yourself, Mr. Audley," he said, with a sneer.

"I came here for that purpose, Mr. Morton," I replied with warmth, for his manner was offensive.

"We sometimes enjoy ourselves," he said somewhat savagely, "at the expense of others; and that is dangerous."

"I feel perfectly assured, sir," I retorted, "that I am in no danger from any one at whose expense I may now be enjoying myself. And you will permit me to add that I am not in the habit of allowing any man to speak to me in the tone and manner which you have assumed."

"I have no doubt that you are right, young man," he replied; "you have scarcely been in the world long enough to have formed any habit as yet."

"Mr. Morton," I said, "I am in the service of ladies, and have no time to waste in words with you. But you shall answer for this."

He turned away with a light sneering laugh, as I proceeded on my errand.

A few moments after my return to the ladies, we heard a peal of laughter from the upper end of the table, where Uncle Weatherby's party of gentlemen was gathered, and which was not far from us.

"Let us go," suggested Miss Bettie, "and learn what they are laughing at."

No objection was made by Lizzie; and, the ladies taking my arms, we started to cross the small space of shaded green-sward between the bench we had occupied and the table. I observed that Lizzie's hand trembled as it lay upon my arm.

"There!" she exclaimed, when we had nearly gained the table, "I have left both my handkerchief and fan under the tree."

I went back to search for them. I found the handkerchief, but could see nothing of the fan. I returned and told her.

"I will go and help you to look for it," she said.

"And I," said Miss Bettie, "will go on to the table."

"Clarence," said Lizzie, when we were alone, "I dropped my handkerchief, and hid my fan in a little hollow of the tree, because I wanted an opportunity of speaking with you alone. I shall not ask you what conversation took place just now between you and Mr. Morton; I fear, from what I have noticed to-day, that it was of such a character that you would not relate it to me if I asked. I beg of you, dear Clarence, to avoid a quarrel with Mr. Morton."

"Sweet Lizzie," I answered, "I am made happy by any interest that you exhibit in me; and I promise you that, if a quarrel occur between Mr. Morton and myself it shall not be by my fault."

"You relieve me very much," said Lizzie, "by making me such a promise. I do not think that Mr. Morton is an ungenerous man, but his passion is very high when once aroused; and—pardon me for saying so—I am sure that you yourself are very quick to resent an affront. You know, dear Clarence, that I can not be happy even in the fear of your getting into a quarrel with any one."

"Your words confer upon me such happiness," I returned, "that I will pledge myself to any thing you desire, knowing that you will not require from me any sacrifice that will compromise my honor or my reputation as a gentleman."

"Of that you may feel assured," she replied. "I will do Mr. Morton the justice to say that his conduct—as far as I have seen—has always been that of a gentleman; but he seems to be in an unusual humor to-day. I hope that you will be as forbearing with him as you can be, should there be any need—which I think is probable, for I feel sure, from what I have noticed, that Teresa King is doing her best, or rather her worst, to arouse him against you; and she has great en-

ergy of character, and, of course, much influence wherever she chooses to exert it. See! there she is talking to him now; notice her eyes as she turns them this way."

Mr. Morton and his companion, probably seeing that they were observed, turned and walked away.

"What can be the matter with Miss King?" I observed.
"What could I have done to offend her so?"

"I have discovered the cause of her offense," said Lizzie. "Cousin Jane told me to-day that Teresa said that it was rude and insulting in you to run away from them to ask me to dance when the first cotillon was forming night before last; that your conduct was particularly insulting to her, who, as a stranger, should have been first invited by you, as you were in company with her at the time. I have no doubt that her anger against you has been much increased on account of your being warmly defended by Cousin Jane and Cousin Maria."

"It was rude in me," I said; "and I shall seek an opportunity to offer her an apology. Still it is astonishing that she should have taken it so much to heart."

"There may be a deeper feeling governing her conduct," said Lizzie, looking into my face with an arch smile; "some women are not easily understood. Do not forget your promise, Clarence," she added, as we approached the party at the table; "I see that Mr. Morton is here."

There were besides that gentleman, Uncle Weatherby, the old major, Cousin Walter, Dr. Turner, Messrs. Travers and Lucas, and several other gentlemen. Miss Bettie was leaning on her uncle's chair. All the party seemed very joyous except Morton, who still looked serious and rather lowering. There was a burst of laughter at the moment of our joining them.

"What is the joke, Miss Bettie?" I asked.

"They were laughing when I came here," she said evasively, I thought, "at a story that your uncle was telling, I believe; I did not hear it."

"And what were you laughing at just now, major?" I asked.
"Let us join you in your merriment."

"Is that you, young Audley?" he said. "Why, we were

laughing at what your cousin Walter was saying just now about your firing up the other day when he told you that you would be spoken of as a milksop in Chittering Neck, if you didn't learn to take your glass."

"You ought not to tell tales out of school, Cousin Walter," I observed, blushing, partly with vexation and partly with the sensitiveness of youth, at being made the subject of ridicule.

"Oh, you needn't mind that," said the major; "there was no harm in the firing up, the harm is in the not drinking. However, perhaps after all you are right. I am opposed myself to getting drunk; but a social glass or two will do nobody any harm. And every body to his liking, I say."

"Perhaps," cried Morton, "Mr. Audley thinks that he makes himself interesting to the ladies by taking only weak drinks. If so, he is much mistaken; the ladies of Chittering Neck have too much spirit to admire a milksop."

Lizzie grasped my arm.

"For heaven's sake, Clarence," she whispered, in alarm, "remember your promise."

"Do not forget yours," I answered, also in a low voice, as I pressed to my side the hand which still rested on my arm.

The gentlemen had instantly arisen to their feet. Every body seemed at once to be convinced that I would not, because I should not, allow such language to pass without notice.

"Mr. Morton," exclaimed Uncle Weatherby in much excitement, "you amaze me. You seem to forget, sir—"

"Pardon me, uncle," I said with assumed calmness, "for interrupting you. Miss Bettie, will you accept my arm?"

"Bettie," said Lizzie, "let us stay; our presence will prevent a quarrel."

"No," answered Miss Bettie taking my arm; "Mr. Audley is right; this is no place for us."

And she cast at Mr. Morton a glance of disdain.

"Yes, girls," said the old major, seeing that Lizzie still hesitated, "you had better go. Or, I say, young Audley, shall I take them, so that you may stay?"

"I will be back in a moment," I answered.

Lizzie reluctantly yielded, and we proceeded to join a group at a little distance.

"Clarence," she said, "I beseech you, do not let this matter proceed to a quarrel."

"You alarm yourself unnecessarily, Lizzie," I answered, keeping with effort a strong restraint upon my feelings; "'tis a small affair after all. Mr. Morton, every body says, is a gentleman, and will no doubt be ready with an apology when I return."

"I would make him apologize," said Miss Bettie rather vehemently. "It was the most unreasonable thing of the kind I ever heard of, entirely unprovoked on your part; and he more than twice your age. It was an offense to us, too, Lizzie, that such words should be spoken in our presence. How Mr. Audley's conduct contrasts with his! You, Mr. Audley, would not even answer an insult while ladies were by."

I bowed, and lifted my hat. The Sullivans were always what is called high-spirited.

"Oh, I do hope, Clarence," said Lizzie, "that you will do your best to keep control of your temper."

She seemed to be much distressed, and no doubt partly because she considered herself the cause of the ill-feeling which Morton entertained toward me; though I thought, and not from vanity, that an interest in my safety had a larger share in her feelings.

"I am thankful to you both, ladies," I said, "for the good-feeling you exhibit toward me in the matter. But I think, Lizzie, that you attribute to it more importance than it deserves. Of course, there will be no quarrel here where ladies are present."

By this time we had arrived near a tree upon the bank of the creek, where Aunt Mary, Mrs. Dalton, Mrs. Wilton, and some other of the elder ladies were present. I left the young ladies there—Lizzie making me a last appeal with her eyes—and returned to the party of gentlemen at the table. They were engaged in a very animated conversation, but became silent when I approached. I requested Major Sullivan to walk aside with me; and he did so at once.

"Come here, Clarence," said uncle, as we turned from the table, "I have something to say to you."

"I will immediately," I answered, "when I have said a few words to Major Sullivan."

"Major," I asked, when we were at a sufficient distance from the rest, "I have heard Cousin Walter say that you have an excellent pair of pistols; will you lend them to me?"

"I will, certainly," he answered. "But you can not intend to fight here."

"Certainly not. But I shall ask Mr. Morton to accompany me up the shore of the river a little way, as soon as the company breaks up, if he refuses to apologize; and we will there settle the matter at once. I shall ask Lucas to act as my friend—of course, it would not do for my cousin to act in such a capacity, unless unavoidably; and Mr. Travers, being a teacher, is out of the question; but I wished to know first if I can get the pistols at once."

The reader will observe that, as I promised him, I am not sparing myself. He will please to remember, also, that I, too, am a South Marylander by birth.

"It is doubtful to me, my young friend," observed the major, whether you would be justified in challenging another for such words. To be sure, they were entirely unprovoked, were given in the presence of ladies, and, moreover, he used an expression which he already knew that you objected to."

"I only look to the fact," I replied, "that he *meant* to insult me; and I do not see, should he refuse to apologize, how I can avoid taking such a course."

"There is weight in what you say," observed the major. "I can not see," he added, after a thoughtful pause, "how Morton can avoid, with honor, making a full apology. It will be his fault entirely should the affair proceed to extremity. Allow me to say that I much approve of your conduct in this business—a gentleman should never quarrel in the presence of ladies; and it was very plain what a restraint you placed upon your feelings. You need not apply to Mr. Lucas (there are, in fact, business relations between him and Morton which would make his acting as your friend *mal à propos*);

the age of your adversary will justify my acting in your behalf."

"I am very much obliged to you," I said, "and accept your kind offer with pleasure. I had no hope to induce me to ask such a favor of you."

"I feel a warm interest in you, young Audley," said the major, "on your own account as well as your father's. I have no doubt that Morton will do what is right. Weatherby has already produced some effect. He has been talking very plainly to him; and Morton himself, when he returns to his right mind—for he has seemed, indeed, almost all day to be beside himself—will no doubt see how wrongly he has acted. He is a good fellow, generally; I never knew him to act so before. Have you done any thing to offend him?"

"Nothing in the world."

"Only jealousy about Lizzie, then; for, I say, young Audley, I think you are cutting him out there; and it goes hard with a man of his years to be defeated in such a case. By the way, I give up all my claim to Lizzie, as a second wife, to you; your conduct to-day in the rescue of her brother, has given you the best claim to her."

He said this with a smile.

After I had related to Major Sullivan what had previously occurred between Morton and myself, we returned to the party of gentlemen, who had now left their seats and were standing together near the table. They were all silent, awaiting, I suppose, the progress of events. Morton stood with folded arms, looking very serious. Major Sullivan took him aside to some distance.

"What is the cause of Morton's acting so, Clarence," asked uncle; "do you know?"

"I can not tell," I answered. "I am sure that I have given him no cause."

"It is most extraordinary," he observed, "that a man always heretofore so gentlemanly, should not only have acted so rudely toward another without a cause, but should have forgotten common propriety as a guest, and even the courtesy due to ladies."

It was evident that uncle had not observed so closely as the major. The younger portion of the gentlemen looked as if they had some idea of the cause of Mr. Morton's behavior, but considered it best to say nothing about it. Very little conversation took place; all of them doubtlessly were too interested or curious about the issue of the interview between Major Sullivan and Mr. Morton—of course they guessed its cause—to have much to say. At length those gentlemen returned to us. Major Sullivan had a pleased expression of face; Mr. Morton looked like one wrought up to perform a disagreeable duty.

"It is not very dignified, gentlemen," said the latter, "for a man of my age to make a formal apology to one so much younger. But both honor and justice require that I should do so; and no one who knows me will attribute my conduct to any other motive. Mr. Audley, I say in the presence of these gentlemen, before whom I committed an offense against you, that I have twice acted rudely toward you to-day without—I sincerely believe—any intended offense on your part, that I truly regret having done so, and hope that you will accept of this sincere apology."

He offered me his hand, which I hastened to accept.

"Your apology is amply satisfactory, Mr. Morton," I said, "and I assure you that I had much rather have your friendship than your enmity."

"You will oblige me," he resumed, "by bearing to the young ladies the expression of my regret and shame for having been so rude as to use such language in their presence."

This was gracefully done; conferring a favor at the moment when he seemed to be asking one. It was very evident that Mr. Morton did not do things "by halves." I thanked him, and then left the party to hasten to relieve Lizzie's uneasiness. Cousin Walter joined me.

"Clarence," he said, as we walked off toward the ladies, "be on your guard against Morton. I know the man. His apology is a sincere one; he could not in fact have honorably settled the affair otherwise; but he is liable to change at any time. The fact, so apparent to every one who observes, that Miss Lizzie Dalton decidedly prefers your attentions to his is

almost enough of itself to drive a man of his temperament to desperation. But he was already prepared to dislike every one of your name before you came to the Neck. There is a vexatious lawsuit pending between him and your cousin, Charles Audley; and Morton is a man who looks upon every one as an enemy who is in any way connected with any one with whom he is at odds. But his loves and hates are very decided and unlimited."

"I thank you, Cousin Walter," I observed, with some excitement; "but Clarence Audley will never go out of his way to avoid a quarrel with any man who seeks to be his enemy."

"I admire your spirit," was the kind reply, "and had no desire to vex you. I merely thought it right to let you know the character of the man with whom you have to deal."

"I did not at all misunderstand your kind object, dear cousin," I responded; "and I shall take care that, if a collision occur between Mr. Morton and myself, the blame shall not rest with me."

Lizzie was, of course, much pleased at hearing that the affair was amicably settled; and her usual gayety immediately returned. Miss Bettie received the information with a sarcastic smile.

"I was sure that he would apologize," she said, meaningly; "I saw you talking with Uncle Thomas, and I saw uncle take him aside."

"His apology, Miss Bettie," I said, "was, I feel assured, freely given; he has only done what a sense of honor dictated."

She made no reply but a light and doubting laugh. I saw a sardonic smile upon the face of Miss King, who was standing near.

"Clarence," said Cousin Walter to me aside, "do you know that it is whispered that Miss Bettie Sullivan is engaged to your cousin Charles? Her so earnestly 'taking sides' against Morton gives strength to the report."

"Charley is a man of taste," I observed. But I confess that I was at first slightly chagrined at Cousin Walter's news; for vanity was beginning to flatter me—so strong and decided

had been the young lady's partisanship—with an unusual share of her good regards. I remembered now, however; that she had not exhibited any uneasiness at all about my personal safety.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE DANCE AND THE RETURN.

"The light fantastic toe" again.—My winsome Cousin Lucy.—Incidents of the Dance.—"Good-by"ing.—The Batteau.—"Nearly drowned in Mataponi Branch."—"How's your brother 'Gusty'?"—Close Cutting.—"You know" and "Says I."

THE sounds made by Uncle Porringer and another fiddler—an elderly negro man belonging to Major Sullivan—while tuning their violins, reminded us that the time was at hand for the cotillons to be forming; and each one of us hastened off to seek his partner. Cousin Lucy was not far; I found her in company with Mrs. Dalton, Mrs. Wilton, Miss Susan Sullivan, and Miss Teresa King. Mr. Travers and Mr. Lucas were with them, and one or two other gentlemen. Cousin Walter soon joined us.

The scene around us at this moment was very stirring. Gentlemen were hurrying about among the groups seeking their partners, mostly no doubt already engaged, for the first cotillon. The boys—who immediately on leaving the dinner-table had straggled away in parties along the shores, or through the adjoining woods—were seen returning in all directions. The young girls, too, who were straying through all parts of the grove, were hastening toward the green plot of ground between the table and the creek-shore, which was intended for the dancers. The negroes, male and female, who were engaged in waiting upon their masters and mistresses, hung around as near to the dancing-ground as a proper respect for the white superiors would allow. Lively chat and gay laughter on all sides mingled with the noise of hurrying feet and the tuning of violin-strings.

"The Siege of Plattsburg"—played with such spirit that, as I heard a black critic near me observe, "'twas jes' de same us ef de fiddles wus er speakin'"—soon gave note that Uncle Porringer and his companion were ready for us. Cousin Walter gave his hand to Miss Susan, Mr. Lucas attached himself to Miss King, Mr. Travers made his bow to Miss Jane; and we formed a cotillon on the spot. A number of others were formed around us, but taking such space that the breeze from the water was felt every where.

In the background, separated from the place occupied by the white company by the table, those of the negro servants not employed in attending upon their masters and mistresses also arranged themselves for dancing, and frequent bursts of laughter gave token that they were enjoying themselves greatly. Good Uncle Weatherby liked to see every one made happy on such an occasion.

How sweet and lovely my little partner looked that happy afternoon. Her hair, confined around the temples, as was the prevalent fashion of the time, by a narrow black ribbon, from which gracefully depended a few wild flowers, fell in abundant curls of glossy blackness around a face and neck as pure and white as alabaster. Her white drapery floated around her, as she gayly moved through the dance, with a waving grace so suited to every gesture that it seemed instinct with her own life. Her eyes, so dark and bright, and yet so soft and gentle, met mine at times with a look so full of guileless delight that she seemed the very impersonation of innocent joyousness. Yet I am sure that she was not more happy than I. Alas! why is it that we ever allow our evil passions to prevent life from being altogether a scene of sunahine? Purity, truth—what else do we need to make it so? Yet these, so freely offered for the mere asking, we turn away from to grovel in the dust of mere earthly desires.

"I am delighted, sweet cousin," I said, as I handed Lucy to a seat, "to see you so gay. All your sadness of the morning is gone away."

"Oh! dancing is so delightful," she answered; "and then I do not know what could have made me feel so unhappy this morning."

"That is very strange, cousin, is it not?" I asked.

"It is strange," she replied, "but it is a fact nevertheless. I suppose that I must have been a little sick without knowing it. I did not sleep well last night."

The second cotillon was soon formed, which I was engaged to dance with Lizzie. The first tune played was "The Girl I left behind me."

"How often shall I recall that tune, dear Lizzie," I whispered to her, "and think of her who will be with me the subject of its reference."

"Hush!" she said lowly and with a blush; "you will be heard if you speak so loudly."

Alas! that the heart is not always a prophet, even in its own realms.

I afterward danced with Miss Jane and Miss Maria Wilton, Miss Bettie and Miss Susan Sullivan (Cousin Walter almost monopolized this young lady), and with Miss King and others. I apologized to the last-named young lady for the unintentional cause of offense which I had given her at Fairview a few evenings before. She received my apology with a very ill grace, and I made a silent resolve to have as little as politeness would allow to say to her thereafter.

So sped the afternoon in mirth, music, and dancing. Young and old alike took part in the exercise. One or two farcical incidents occurred. Cousin Walter, at Aunt Mary's suggestion that Mrs. Mayhew deserved such politeness for her kindness in offering her help in arranging the ground, invited that showily-dressed lady to dance. As she knew nothing of the steps or figures, she was continually putting the cotillon "out," and Cousin Walter, with a want of truth perhaps excused by his courtesy, always insisted that it was his fault. Cousin Jack, who danced with much ease and grace, exhibited his talents for mimicry by a burlesque imitation of young Mr. Rollins's awkward dancing before that gentleman's face, who was the only person within sight unaware of his being the subject of jest. Old Major Sullivan, too, created much merriment by his jokes and funny dancing.

At length, the sun shining low in the west reminded us that

some of the company had some miles to travel by land and water that evening, and that the night air was unhealthy at this season, and our pleasant party began to break up. The negro servants had removed the tables and the cooking and eating utensils some time before, and were only awaiting the departure of the guests to remove the tents also.

Soon parties were seen bidding "good-by," and departing as they came, on foot, on horseback, in carriages, in canoes, and batteaux, some going away by the forest carriage-road, others along the shore, and the waters around were soon covered by the paddle and oar boats, large and small, all wending their way homeward from the scene of enjoyment. The rosy hues of a descending sun still light the picture of that scene in my memory.

"Clarence," said Mrs. Dalton to me, when I was helping her into the boat that was to take her and her family home (Mr. Morton did the same service by her daughter), "Lizzie tells me that you have an engagement to go together to Mrs. Macgregor's from church to-morrow. Go home with us to-night."

I told her that it would be a great pleasure to me to accept her invitation, but that, as Mr. Worthington had promised to go home with uncle partly upon my account, it would not be courteous in me to be away from Old Delight, but that I should be at Crystal Cove early in the morning. Mr. Morton accompanied Lizzie and her mother home.

Dr. Turner, as well as Mr. Worthington (the riding-horse of the latter had been sent to Old Delight some time before), was added to the party which returned to uncle's. As the road of the doctor from St. Joseph's to the festival lay in the way of Old Delight, he had left his horse at the latter place.

The large batteau sped before the swiftly-moving oars over the waters of the creek, which were slightly stirred by the light evening breeze. Sitting beside Cousin Lucy, I leaned over the side of the boat. The lively conversation between the rest of the passengers, the musical sound of the waters, and the glorious sunset hues, shining far and near over water and land and sky, suited well the thoughtful but happy mood

of my mind. Lizzie loved me; her mother had shown even a mother's feelings toward me—she had called me "son." I had logic for my bright day-dreams—day-dreams more akin to the rising than the setting sun. I was aroused from my pleasant fancies by the voice of Uncle Weatherby, following a hearty laugh among the passengers.

"Hallo there, Clarence!" he exclaimed; "are you awake?"

"Yes, uncle," I answered, rousing myself up.

"Are you listening to Dr. Turner's joke?"

"No, sir," I replied, with some confusion.

"Clarence can not help himself," said Aunt Mary, apologetically; "he used to be 'given' to dreaming awake when a boy."

"I have often noticed him," said uncle, "sitting still and thoughtful when every body else present was heartily amused; and then he would perhaps 'come out' suddenly with something funny when all others had become serious. But I supposed that he had grown out of such a bad habit."

"If one falls into such a habit in youth," remarked Mr. Worthington, "it is more apt to grow upon him as he becomes older."

"Well," said uncle, "as he is wide awake now, and the story is but little more than commenced, perhaps, doctor, you will favor him by beginning it again?"

"I shall be much obliged to you, doctor," I said; and then apologized in a rather confused way, I think, for my absence of mind.

"Mr. Audley was probably not acquainted," said Dr. Turner, "with young Dr. Day, who had an office in St. Joseph's for about two years, and who removed from that village about the middle of last spring?"

"I do not know that I ever heard of him," I answered.

"Dr. Day," began Dr. Turner, "is a young man of rare talents, but unfortunately is, or rather was—for he may be a sober man now for aught I know—much addicted to patronizing 'the ardent.' Drink had sometimes a singular effect upon him, as you will learn from the following incident. One day last March, after visiting some patients in the neighbor-

hood, I returned to a late dinner at the village inn where both he and myself boarded. On taking a seat at dinner, I noticed Day sitting at the opposite side of the table. I spoke to him, but he did not observe me. I saw that he was, as usual, a little 'boozy.' The potatoes, a vegetable of which I am fond, being beyond my reach, and near to him, I said, in a very distinct voice, 'Dr. Day, will you do me the favor to help me to a potato?' He looked up, nodded to me, and then, as I held my plate out to him, emptied into it the whole dish of potatoes. After performing this feat, he seemed for the first time to recognize me; an expression of vexation on my part having arrested his attention. 'Hallo, Turner,' he exclaimed, 'is that you? I say, doc., how is Mrs. Macgregor's little girl? Is Morton's negro man any better? I was near being drowned in Matapei Branch to-day.' 'Mrs. Macgregor's little girl is better,' I answered; 'Mr. Morton's negro is doing well; and I congratulate you on your escape.' He again sunk into silence and apparent stupor, fixing his eyes, as before, intently on his plate. The ham was also on his side of the table. 'Day,' I said, partly through curiosity to see what he would do, 'I will thank you to help me to a slice of that ham.' He stuck the carving-fork into the joint, and with some difficulty transferred the whole of it to my plate. 'See here, Day,' I exclaimed, rather exasperated, 'what the deuce is the matter with you?' 'Why, hallo, doc.,' he answered, looking into my face, 'when did you get in? By-the-by, I was near being drowned in Matapei Branch to-day. How is Mrs. Macgregor's child? Is Morton's man any better?' 'I have answered those questions once before,' I said, 'but I will answer them again. I came in but a few moments since; both Mrs. Macgregor's child and Morton's man are doing well; and I am glad of your escape.' Day was quite fond of a good cigar; and when I was leaving the room—as he had seemed to have a good appetite, I thought that his dinner would sober him, to some extent at least—I asked him to come to my office after he had finished eating, and take a smoke. 'I say, old fellow,' he said, 'is that you? How did you leave Mrs. Macgregor's child, and that negro man of Morton's? I tell you

what, doc., I was very near being drowned in Mataponi Branch to-day.' I took no notice of what he said this time, but went to my office. Ten or fifteen minutes afterward he came in, walking as steadily as if he had not been drinking. I offered him a seat by the office-table, and pushed the cigar-box toward him. 'Help yourself,' I said, 'I think that you will find them pretty good.' 'Thank you,' he replied; 'I say, Turner, how did you find your patients to-day, Mrs. Macgregor's little girl and Morton's negro man? You have no idea, old fellow, how narrowly I escaped drowning in Mataponi Branch to-day.' 'Dr. Day,' I exclaimed, becoming considerably vexed at his persisting in confining himself to that small piece of conversation, 'confound you and Morton and his negro—I will except Mrs. Macgregor and her child; and I sincerely regret your escape, and wish that you *had* been drowned in Mataponi Branch to-day.' 'It is a fact, old fellow,' was his answer, 'I was never so near being drowned in all my life before; and what was that you said about Mrs. Macgregor's child and Morton's negro?' I found that it was of no use to expostulate with him, and had to submit to frequent repetitions of the same questions and information till he lay down on the settee in my office and went to sleep. I do not know whether his singular pertinacity was caused by stupor and forgetfulness produced by intoxication, or whether it had its source in a drunken idea of fun."

Much laughter accompanied this relation when the narrator came to the "*Day loquitur*."

"Dr. Day," remarked Travers, "reminds me of the Yankee clock that persisted in striking beyond the hour, and even struck fifty times after its owner, in a fit of anger, had put a load of shot in its face."

"Quite a new story, that," said Lucas, ironically, "will you tell it to us in full?"

"I thought every body had heard it," answered Travers, unsuspectingly. "However, if the company wish to hear it, I have no objection to tell it."

"Why, Travers," said Dr. Turner, "are you about to fall into such a trap as that? Do not tell it, please. Who has not heard the story of the Yankee clock?"

There was a general good-natured laugh at Travers's expense, encouraged by his own example.

"What story is that, uncle," I asked, "which you were telling at the dinner-table to-day, and which created such laughter when Miss Lizzie, Miss Bettie, and I were about joining you?"

"That was the story about old Stanley, I suppose," answered uncle.

"Tell it to us, pa, please," asked Jack.

"All the gentlemen except Clarence have heard it," said uncle; "but perhaps he and Mary and Lucy would like to hear it."

"It will bear repetition," remarked Lucas.

The ladies and myself requested him to tell it.

"All of you—even Clarence—" began uncle, "know old Captain Wise, of the steamer Clearwater, and what a self-willed old fellow he is. He has a number of good qualities, it is true; yet few people would be sorry to learn of a good practical joke played on him. Old Stanley is a very simple, indeed but little more than half-witted, man, living in the village of Shellborough; and in this case, as in Dr. Day's, it is doubtful whether what occurred was intended by him as a joke or not. One day the steamer had finished landing an unusually large freight at Shellborough, and, leaving the wharf considerably after her usual time, had steamed some two or three hundred yards down the river on the ebb-tide, when old Stanley came running down to the shore waving a red handkerchief in his hand. Captain Wise, of course, took this as a signal that a passenger wished to get on board; and, as he was always willing to make fare even at some sacrifice of time, the steamer was brought to a halt, the steam blown off, and the jolly-boat let down from the davits. Captain Wise came in her himself toward the shore. When he got within a few yards of the beach old Stanley waved him back with his hand, and called out to him, 'You needn't come any nearer, captain; I heard that your brother 'Gusty was sick, and only wanted to ask you how he is.' Any body who knows the old captain need not be told how angry this made him.

He piled what Dr. Jackson would politely style ‘reversed benedictions’ indiscriminately on his brother ‘Gusty as well as old Stanley. ‘Give way, boys,’ he said to the oarsmen; ‘if I catch the old rascal, I will take him to Baltimore free of passage-money.’ But old Stanley was too nimble for him; he did not stop running either—so alarmed he was—till he gained the hill overlooking the village. There he watched the steamer’s departure, and would not leave his post and return to the village till she was out of sight down the river.”

“ You remember, Audley,” said Travers, after the laugh had subsided, “ that mention is made in the St. Joseph’s Ghost Stories—the manuscript of which I sent you yesterday—of an old Captain Macgregor? That is, if you have yet read the paper.”

“ I glanced over it this morning,” I answered, “ before I left my room, but have not had an opportunity to read it yet. Still I noticed the name you speak of.”

“ An old gentleman in St. Joe’s,” continued Travers, “ who knew Captain Macgregor well, told me, the other day, of an amusing misfortune that happened to the former owner of the Old Brick House. The old captain was dignified in his bearing, and attached much importance to personal appearance; of course, he must have been very sensitive to ridicule. He was in the habit of having his hair trimmed, when it needed that operation, by a tailor named Grier who lived in St. Joe’s. One day, when he came into ‘town’ for the purpose of getting his ‘tonsil appendage’—as Dr. Jackson calls it—shortened, the tailor happened not to be at home. A younger brother, and apprentice of Grier’s, however—a lad aged sixteen or seventeen years—told the captain that he could trim his hair for him as well as his brother. He spoke so confidently of his ability in the hair-cutting business that the old gentleman was induced to submit himself to his hands. The fact was, however, that the lad had never undertaken such a job in his life before, but was impressed with the belief that it was a very simple, easy thing to do. The result was that, having at his first effort cut the hair upon one side of the head shorter than that on the other, in his efforts to restore an equality of length

by taking—as the monkey in dividing the cheese between the two cats—now a little more from this side, and then a little more from that side, he left the scalp almost naked. When the captain—who, during the operation, had occasionally expressed some fear that the lad was taking off too much hair—arose to view himself in the looking-glass, you can imagine what a sight he saw there. His immediate impulse was to seize the lad and give him a thrashing; but young Grier, who had stood tremblingly by in fear of such a consequence, at the first indication on the captain's part of an intention to commit an assault upon him, sprang out of the door. The captain, in his rage, made affairs worse by giving chase along the street, uttering as he ran certain expletives which drew the people to their front doors to see what was the matter. The old gentleman, becoming aware at length of the ridiculous appearance he presented (he had left his hat in the tailor's shop), gave up the pursuit. He kept very closely in doors for a week or two afterward. I do not know whether or not the lad was ever punished."

This story, though somewhat marred in the telling, perhaps, was well received.

"What a funny old gentleman Major Sullivan is," observed Travers (who was quite elated at the merriment caused by his story), "and how fond he is of a good joke."

"Yes, very funny," said Lucas, with a pronunciation which made his meaning doubtful (probably he still remembered with some vexation the major's hit at the legal fraternity); "but what a queer habit he has of saying 'I say.'"

"You ought to hear Mrs. Mayhew's sister, Miss Betsy Tree," said Cousin Walter, "if you wish to be aware of the utmost extent to which the use of favorite phrases can be carried. I wonder, by-the-by, why she was not at the fête to-day."

"She staid at home, Mrs. Mayhew said, to take care of the younger children," said Aunt Mary. "She is a very good woman, Walter, and you ought not to ridicule her."

"I am not ridiculing her, but only her way of talking," answered Cousin Walter, dryly. "Miss Betsy," he continued, "is considerably beyond her teens, and is, therefore, very fond

of being bantered on the subject of matrimony—taking it, probably, as a compliment. Father asked her some time ago when she was going to be married. ‘Bless my life, Mr. Weatherby, you know,’ she answered, ‘that is the very question, you know, that Mr. Jarboe, you know’ (she is thought to have a ‘kindness’ for Jarboe), ‘asked me, you know, the other day, you know. Says Mr. Jarboe to me, says he, “Miss Betsy,” says he, “when,” says he, “are you going to get married?” says he. “Well,” says I, “Mr. Jarboe,” says I, “when,” says I, “I find a man,” says I, “who takes a fancy to me,” says I, “and I takes a fancy to him,” says I, “then,” says I, “Mr. Jarboe,” says I, “I mean to git married,” says I. “Well,” says Mr. Jarboe to me, says he, “Miss Betsy,” says he, “that is a good thing,” says he.’”

“I have much more charity,” remarked Mr. Worthington, “for the You-knows than I have for the I-says. ‘You know’ is from a polite feeling, intimating, ‘*I* can not give *you* information;’ ‘I say’ is, I should think, a little indicative, at least, of personal vanity; Miss Betsy seems to be influenced by both feelings.”

Other jokes followed this, alternated with lively chat and spirited sallies of wit and humor; and the flow of merry feeling continued even after we arrived at Old Delight.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.

The Promenade.—Skeptical difficulties.—The Deity; the Resurrection.—Where is the Hereafter?—The Mind the real Man.—The Soul within the Body; the Spiritual World within the Natural World; the Spirit within the Letter.—Man a Microcosm.—The Trinity.—A psychological Case.

ON our return to Uncle Weatherby’s we found that Aunt Jinny had some hours before resumed her sway over the kitchen department; and supper at our usual early hour proved that her professional zeal was still unflagging not-

withstanding her arduous exertions during the day. After that meal was concluded, Dr. Turner and Messrs. Lucas and Travers took their departure for St. Joseph's (Lucas on a visit to Travers), notwithstanding a pressing invitation to spend the night with us. After those gentlemen had gone the rest of us removed to the piazza, where we could receive the benefit of the light breeze and enjoy the moonlight.

Very shortly afterward Mr. Worthington and I stepped out into the yard, and commenced promenading to and fro upon the pleasant carpet of sward, at such a distance from the others that our conversation could not be overheard.

"Of course," he said, "you would not wish that your uncle's family should know that you are a skeptic."

"No," I answered; "it might do harm and could not possibly do good, that I can see."

"I agree with you," he observed.

"Skepticism," began Mr. Worthington, after a pause, "finds two great difficulties in the way of a belief in the truth of the Christian religion. The first is an inability to comprehend—merely in an intellectual sense, however—the character of the Deity as illustrated in the writings of the Church; the other is the seeming impossibility of realizing to the mind the idea of another world and man's immortality. Is it not so with you?"

"It is," I answered. "I can not understand the doctrine of the Trinity. I am answered that it is not to be understood; but that it is a mystery to be believed. Yet my mind will not rest content with this. I do not see how it is possible that I am to believe a thing without knowing what it is that I believe. And as to the other life—where is it? Let your fancy rove

"From world to luminous world as far.

As the universe spreads its flaming walls,

you can find no reason why one star should be preferred to another as man's final abode. Again: what are we to do without bodies? and can these bodies, after they have been dissolved and have gone to form parts of other bodies, be ours again? These and similar difficulties constantly occur to me."

"They are natural to the thinking mind," he replied, "at least to the speculative intellect; and there are many such at the present day. The last mentioned of your objections is the least. We will begin with that, and go upward as we advance. Which is the real man, the mind or the body? It is true that you may admire a handsome form; but you can not love its possessor unless he or she be true and good. Which, then, I repeat is the real human being, the mind or the body?"

"The mind, undoubtedly," I answered.

"Let us investigate the subject farther," he continued; "there is more in that acknowledgment than you are perhaps aware of. It contains, in fact, in some sense, an answer to every objection which has occurred to you. The real man—the mental or spiritual—is invisible to natural eyes, and his existence is only manifested through the apparent man or body. So the real world—the spiritual or mental—is invisible to natural eyes, but its existence is manifested by means of the life which it gives to the natural world; for all matter is dead of itself. This is an acknowledged, and, indeed, a very evident truth. Again: the mind is seated in the brain; we know this, for we feel it acting there. Yet it is present in every part of the body, giving it impulse and activity. So God, the Central Life—*the* Life, indeed—dwelling in the very inmost and highest of being, is present in every part of His universe, gives it existence, and governs it from centre to circumference. I may mention here that the presence of the mind in every part of the body—exhibited by the fact that every part of the body is sensitive to pleasure and to pain—proves that the spiritual form corresponds to the natural; in other words, that there is a spiritual body in the natural body, as there is a spiritual world within the natural world, corresponding to it in every respect, yet differing from it in the character of its life, as the mind differs from the body. Thus you see that each human being—a little world in himself—is an image of the universe or great world; and that the study of the individual man—yourself—will throw a flood of light on the questions which you wish to investigate."

"How beautiful! how true!" I exclaimed, with delight.

"What a genuine impulse it was which caused you to utter that exclamation," said Mr. Worthington; "for beauty is the form of truth. In other words, the mind acknowledges a doctrine or sentiment as beautiful only because it feels it to be true. To return to our subject, however—the scripture is full of evidence of the truth of what I have said. You will find this as you read. As all Scripture is consistent with itself, if rightly understood, one passage will suffice now. The Lord tells us that 'the kingdom of heaven cometh not by observation,' that men can not say of it 'Lo! it is here, or lo! it is there, for behold the kingdom of heaven is within you.' Time and space are qualifications of the present life; that they do not apply to the other life is proved by the fact that you can not apply them to the mind, which is a genuine image of the spiritual world, as the body is a genuine image of the natural world. Thus the spiritual world is not in space or time."

"I do not understand you fully."

"You may say of a mind that it is *large* or *capacious*—you say this because your ideas are formed amid material things; yet the mind can not be measured by yards, feet, or inches. You may say of a mind that it is *old*—for the same reason; yet, in the sense in which you use the words, one who is twenty years of age may have an older mind than another who is seventy. You have heard the common saying (and there are many suggestions of wisdom in these common sayings) 'an old head upon young shoulders,' meaning an old mind in a young body."

"I apprehend your meaning so far," I said. "But what do you intend by saying that the spiritual world is not in space or time? I thought you said differently just now."

"The confusion is in the words rather than in the idea," answered Mr. Worthington. "When I say that the spiritual world is not in space or time, I use the words as indicating being—that it has not its proper life in space and time, but only manifests its life there. It lives within and above space and time, as the soul lives within yet above the body. My

object is to show you the close analogy between the spirit, or mental world of each individual, and the great and universal mental or spiritual world; and thus the force of the passage that the kingdom of heaven is not ‘here or there’—that is, in space—but is within us.”

“I understand you, I think.”

“I said that the study of the individual man—yourself—will throw a world of light on the questions in which you are interested. Let us look at this position in another view. The Scriptures tell us that man is formed in the ‘image and likeness’ of God. If there be a Trinity in the Deity, then, it must also exist in man. Man has a soul and a body, from a union of which proceeds a life in this world. Thus from the union of the Father, the essential Divinity, and the Son, the Divine Humanity, or manifestation of the Divinity (‘He hath declared Him’), proceeds the Holy Spirit, or God’s presence and power with us (‘I go to my Father that the Comforter may come’). In other words, as man’s life is manifested to the outer world by his body, so God’s Divine Life is manifested to our human nature by means of His Divine Humanity. Again: man’s mind is composed of a will and an intellect; and the will acting into or upon the intellect produces mental action, whence thoughts and feelings are generated. Thus the Divine Will, or Love (‘God is Love’), acting into or upon the Divine Intellect, or Wisdom (‘God is Truth’), produces or becomes the Divine Power, or God, as an operating energy upon the whole world of mind and matter. Many passages in the Holy Book will, as you read, strengthen this view.”

“It opens to my mind,” I said, “a whole world, as it were, of new and beautiful thought.”

“I have said enough upon this subject for this evening,” remarked Mr. Worthington. “What I have said will give your mind food for thought, which, I trust, will weaken the foundations of your skepticism. But read the Scriptures now, think for yourself, and you will understand them better. We will resume the subject some other time.”

We returned to the piazza.

“We were speaking, Mr. Worthington,” said uncle, as we

seated ourselves, "of the case of Jack Felter. We have heard of it as a matter of public talk, but we have never learned the particulars. Will you do us the favor to give us an account of them?"

"I will with pleasure," replied Mr. Worthington. "And, by-the-by, Mr. Audley, the introduction of this subject is quite a coincidence; you will find that it has no inconsiderable bearing upon the questions of which we were discoursing."

"I am curious to hear it," I remarked.

"To make the case understood by our young friend from the city, Mr. Weatherby," observed Mr. Worthington, "I shall have to state some things of which the rest of you are already informed."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE WOOD-CUTTER'S SELF.

The mulatto Wood-cutter.—Working in Solitude.—The Friday's mysterious Cutting.—Who did the Work?—"He died six years ago."—The Wood-cutter's singular Agony.—He accepts the Pay.

You must know that a considerable part of the income of many of the land-owners in this section of the State is drawn from the large tracts of forest that still exist here. Those who are extensively engaged in furnishing the Baltimore market with fire-wood, often hire a number of wood-cutters, either among the poorer classes of white men, or the free negroes of the neighborhood. I should here inform you that I employ an overseer on my plantation, but attend to the wood-cutters myself, as but few overseers have sufficient education to make the necessary calculations in the latter business.

Among the hands whom I employed last winter was a dark mulatto, considerably below the middle height, but squarely and powerfully built. There was something unusual in the man's appearance. Burning beneath dark, thick, and over-hanging brows,

"His eyes were like two watch-fires lone,
Seen through the murky night."

Their fiercely melancholy expression seemed to me to have sprung from deep, ceaseless, and disagreeable thought. His gaze when addressing you was generally downward; though he often fixed his eyes upon yours, yet did not keep them there longer than an instant; as if he feared to meet your look, but wished you not to think so. There was also an affectation of cheerfulness in his manner, which was quite evident to one who observed him attentively. Notwithstanding these suspicious appearances, Jack Felter had a character for honesty and sobriety. He was much more intelligent and better informed than his race generally; he had learned to read, and his language, therefore, was much more correct than is usual with negroes. He had also the reputation of being the best wood-cutter in the neighborhood, being able, the winter through, to cut and rank two cords of wood a day.

When he came to me for employment, he requested to be allowed, if convenient, to work in a part of the forest by himself. The cause which he assigned for this request was, that he wished to raise a certain sum of money for the purchase of his wife, who was a slave, and that he sometimes lost the reward of his labor when dishonest wood-cutters placed their marks upon his wood. This request was easily granted.

The part of the forest to which I directed Jack Felter was between my house and the place where the main body of axemen were engaged. Each day, in passing by the spot, I discovered him industriously employed, and generally stopped a minute or two to exchange a few words with him in relation to his work. On Friday of the first week of his engagement, I found that he was cutting on the farther side of a very steep ravine. As he was not more than fifty yards from the road, I called to him to inquire why he had changed his ground. He did not appear to hear me; and I attributed his not doing so to the sound of his axe, which rang loud and far in the clear atmosphere of a frosty morning. Almost immediately afterward, however, he turned his head toward me for an instant, but, as it was bent rather downward, and the broad wool hat was drawn over his brows, I could not distinctly see his face. I again called to him; but he resumed his work

without noticing me; and I passed on, no longer attempting to attract his attention.

It is my custom to measure on Monday morning the wood cut during the previous week, and at the same time to pay the hands. Jack Felter—whom I must have neglected to acquaint with this rule—called at my house late in the afternoon of Saturday to receive pay for his week's work.

"But, Jack," I objected, "your wood has not been measured. I measure on Monday morning."

"Yes, marster," he answered, "but nobody cuts with me, you know; so I couldn't cheat you if I wanted to."

"That's true," I said. "How many cords have you cut?"

"Ten cords, marster."

"Why, Jack, I have always heard it said that you could average two cords a day."

"So I do, marster; but I was sick on Friday, and didn't work."

"Did not work on Friday!" I exclaimed. "You are surely mistaken, Jack. I saw you at work on the farther side of the ravine, as I went by yesterday morning."

"Somebody else, marster," said Jack, with an incredulous shake of the head; "I haven't cut a stick on the other side of the ravine; never was there in my life, marster."

"Somebody else! why, Jack, are you crazy? The person, whoever he was, wore the very same hat, coat, pantaloons—and face, as well as I could see—which you wear at present."

"'Twasn't me, marster," was all the mulatto said; and he spoke it with a tantalizing smile of doubt upon his countenance, as if he were half inclined to think that *my own mind* was not exactly right.

"Did you not observe to-day, that some one had been cutting on the opposite side of the ravine?" I asked, rather testily; for I acknowledge that I was thoughtless enough to be vexed by his smile of doubt.

"No, marster," he answered, "I didn't take notice—was too busy."

"Let us go and see," I said; "the distance is not far, and the sun is still a half hour 'high.' If there has been wood

cut on the other side of the ravine, it will be settled at least that some one has been at work there."

I resolved on going to the spot in hope that something might occur there to clear up the strange point in debate between us. Indeed, I should have perhaps been angry with the fellow for presuming to appear, even by the slightest insinuation, to doubt my word, but that there was something extraordinary in his denying with such an air of truth, what I had beheld with my own eyes; especially since, if he spoke falsehood, it was evidently against his own interest.

As I rode to the woods I formed various surmises with regard to the affair; not one of which, of course, was satisfactory. The mulatto, who walked by the side of my horse, seemed considerably moved by some painful thought. His face, as usual, was cast down; but now and then he sighed heavily. We had both been silent heretofore; but at length the current of my fancies was suddenly checked by the mulatto's asking, in an abrupt and startling manner, the following questions:

"Had he on an old drab pea-jacket, did you say, marster?"

"Yes."

"Drab flushing pantaloons?"

"Yes, Jack."

"Old black wool hat, broad brim?"

"He had."

"Big whiskers, marster?"

"Big whiskers, Jack."

He was silent again for an instant, and then continued,

"What day of the month was yesterday, marster?"

"The eighth of December," I answered.

"The eighth of December! Oh, my God!" uttered the wood-cutter in a vehement whisper, and yet as if unconscious of being heard.

"What is the matter, Jack?" I asked.

"Nothing, marster," he answered; "nothing, only marster must speak the truth; and 'tis strange, very strange."

"It is strange," I said, looking observingly into his face.

"If," I mused, "I could read the thoughts which agitate that

countenance, how soon would this mystery be elucidated?" Indeed, if the wood-cutter's questions had checked the flight of my fancy, they had also given it a new and more exciting theme to wonder upon.

Jack made no farther remark, and seemed to be endeavoring to overcome some strong emotion.

When we reached the ground, there was the rank of wood neatly piled, and roughly marked with charcoal in two or three places with the initials J. F., the mulatto's mark.

"Well, Jack," I asked, pointing to the wood, "what do you say to that?"

"Marster's right, sir; but who could have done it?"

"Yourself, Jack, or somebody very much like you, if I may trust to my eyes."

"It couldn't have been me, marster, without my knowing it," he said, as if half unconsciously.

I made no retort, but watched the face of the wood-cutter, over which a shade of unutterable agony was passing.

"Somebody like me!" he muttered, as if in a dream; "yes, somebody like me did cut it, but not a living man; he died six years ago."

"How did he die?" I asked.

The question seemed to arouse him partially, and he answered, though still speaking like one in a dream, and rather as if under the impulse of some previous thought than of that which at present seemed to absorb him,

"Killed by the fall of a tree."

The behavior of the mulatto excited my curiosity to a painful degree, and hoping to obtain from him, in his present strange state of mind, some elucidation of his mysterious conduct, I again questioned him:

"When was he killed?"

He did not answer, and seemed now totally unaware of my presence. Seizing, as if to avoid falling, upon a stout sapling which grew near, he tottered against it, while his hat falling displayed such an expression of countenance as I shall never forget. He gazed upon the rank of wood with the horrified look with which one might be supposed to stare upon a threat-

ening spectre that stands suddenly before him, while the muscles of his countenance worked as if under the influence of some powerful agony.

"Yes," he murmured, "it must be so! Drab jacket and pantaloons, broad wool hat, and big whiskers! and then Friday, and the eighth of December! It must be so. But all fair—all fair. You pay me—I pay you. You pay me for one day's work—I pay you for—"

He stopped as if struck suddenly by some reflection which afforded partial relief—a reflection no doubt started by his mind, unconsciously to the thinker, to release it from the apparent horror of following out its last deduction, whatever it was. He soon revealed the thought which was the source of consolation.

"But maybe 'tain't so, after all," he said. "Marse Worthington didn't say he was taller than me. But then how came the wood there?"

He paused an instant.

"Ah! now I have it. One of the other hands did it just to show that he could cut two cords of wood a day as well as me; and he cut on t'other side of the gully, 'cause he 'fraid I would say 'twas mine; and he put on clothes like mine for fear Marse Worthington would stop him."

He became silent, cast his eyes toward the ground, and appeared slowly recovering himself, while the expression upon his face gradually faded into one of deep melancholy. Seeing him once more himself, I asked him, principally to break the disagreeable spell which seemed to be over me,

"Well, Jack, what conclusion havé you arrived at?"

Without seeming to be aware that his self-communings had been expressed audibly, he answered by stating his last supposition.

"But, Jack," I objected, "if one of the other hands had cut the wood he would surely not have put your mark upon it."

This he seemed to have overlooked.

I can scarcely say what thought prompted me to make the remark. It certainly arose from no wish to see him again in

such a paroxysm as his last, for the principal feeling which that had produced in me at the moment was horror. Yet I must confess that my curiosity was highly excited, and it was evident that the mulatto was possessed of some dreadful secret (mysteriously connected with the Friday's wood-cutting), and which I was exceedingly, and I presume not unnaturally anxious to fathom.

The objection, however, had not the effect upon him which would have been anticipated. He had partly recovered command over his feelings, and still appeared to retain it, though by a strong effort of the will, as if the mind, which had been overmastered by the power and suddenness of the previous blow, was now prepared with concentrated forces to guard itself against farther attack. He made no answer to my remark, except, "Sure enough, marster," became abstracted, and fell again into deep and sad thought. We returned to the house.

"Well, Jack," I asked, when paying the wood-cutter for his work, "shall I pay you for the Friday's work? It is probable, after all, that, as you seem to be a dreamy sort of fellow, you cut the wood yourself, and forgot all about it."

"I couldn't have forgot all about it, marster," he replied; "but I will take the money, if you please, sir; I reckon 'tis mine." And he added, as if to himself, "I fear I must pay for it, and at a dear price too."

He appeared to have come to some conclusion which he kept to himself. How much I desired to read his thoughts!

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE WOOD-CUTTER'S SELF—*Concluded.*

Wonderings.—Was it a Self?—The Wood-cutter pines away.—The Confession.—“Murder will out.”—Death of the Wood-cutter.—Sleep-waking.

AFTER Jack Felter had left me, I fell into meditation upon the subject, forming supposition after supposition, but not one could I devise that was not liable to some insurmountable objection. “Perhaps,” thought I, “it was, after all, nothing but a trick of the fellow’s to try the strength of my nerves, with the intention of robbing me if he thought he could do so with safety. But no; his agony was too powerful—too terrible to be counterfeit. Or, perhaps”—but I will not trouble you with all my attempts to imagine a natural cause for the occurrence.

We are all of us tinctured to a greater or less degree with superstition, nor do I pretend to be an exception to the rule. Heaven may perhaps (mind I say “perhaps”) occasionally allow an individual or more of the spiritual world around us to become visible to physical eyes for some purpose in consonance with its eternal principles of justice. An adequate cause, indeed, might be to keep alive in our minds a belief in the reality of the other life, or even, perhaps, the revelation of some great crime which might otherwise remain hidden from the knowledge of men ; and this case, I fancied, might be one in point. The anguish, the horror, so plainly pictured upon the countenance of the mulatto proved beyond a doubt that some secret, which seemed terrible at least to him, pressed like an incubus upon his mind.

I am an ardent admirer of supernatural stories of the German school, and had lately read one of such a description. My imagination had been highly excited by its wild and dreamy visionings ; and, being unable to account for the occurrences which inspired my musings in a natural manner, I

began at length to be impressed with the idea that it was the wood-cutter's *self* which I had seen—not the man in *propria persona*, but his apparition or spectre; his own form thus rising, as it were, in judgment against him.

Nothing farther worth mentioning concerning the wood-cutter occurred for several weeks, except that he became thinner and sicklier in appearance day after day, and the expression of melancholy upon his countenance, which he ceased to make an effort to conceal, deepened continually. No smile ever lit his features; nor did he any longer attempt to affect that cheerfulness which he could not have felt for years. He seemed, indeed, to be wearing away from earth, and acted as one who considers himself fated. At length, about three weeks after the strange occurrences which I have related, he ceased to appear at his work.

One afternoon, three or four days afterward, I was sitting in my office giving some directions to one of my field-hands, when Jack Felter came in. Though but a few weeks before he had presented all the indications of robust health and a powerful constitution, yet he was now worn nearly to a skeleton. His complexion presented that almost unnatural aspect which is produced by paleness upon persons of his color; and the light that alternately faded and brightened in his eyes, seemed to emblem that which burned in his lamp of life. The strange expression of his face would have induced me to consider him insane, had not his words removed that impression.

"Marse Worthington," he asked, "you are a magistrate, are you not?"

I answered that I was.

"I'm glad of it, marster," he said; "I'd rather tell it to you than to any body else. It's a true saying, 'Murder will out.' I can't keep it to myself any longer. But what do I care for that now? My life can't last much longer; and I am willing to do my best to pay for my crime by giving up to the law the little of it that is left. Besides, has not *he*, by paying what he owed me, called upon me to pay my life for the life I took? You remember, marster, the eighth of December, that Friday's wood-cutting?"

"I can never forget it, Jack," I answered.

"You will soon know, marster," he said, "who did that day's work. 'Twas no living man did it."

I confess that my sensations, on finding myself in the presence of an acknowledged murderer, were far from agreeable; although my suspicions, aroused by the previous conduct of the mulatto, had somewhat prepared me for this interview. His narrative I relate, for an evident reason, in my own words in preference to his. It was to the following purport:

Six years before Jack had hired himself to a gentleman in the neighborhood. Among the hands was a mulatto by the name of Rixon, who bore a remarkable resemblance to Jack in all respects, except that he was about an inch taller. It was probably on account of this resemblance that they formed a friendship for each other, and after a while entered into a partnership in their wood-cutting. On Friday, the eighth of December, about a month after this partnership had been formed, Rixon was absent from his work, and made no excuse to Jack the next morning except that he had been taking a holiday. It happened on the following Monday, when the two partners met in the forest, that none of the other wood-cutters had yet arrived. It may be mentioned that Rixon on this occasion wore a black wool hat and a suit of drab plushing, a dress very common among the wood-cutters, and such as Jack Felter usually wore while in my employment.

Before commencing work the partners proceeded, as was their custom, to divide their last week's pay. Rixon, who had received the money for both, said he supposed that they should divide equally as usual. To this Jack objected, declaring that he alone was entitled to the proceeds of the Friday's work. Rixon then proposed that Jack should be paid for one of the two cords which had been cut on Friday, and that each should receive half of the remainder. Felter positively refused to accede to any terms but those upon which he had first insisted. Rixon then handed him his share of the money for the five days' work, and declared that he would keep the Friday's pay in his own possession until Jack should agree to divide fairly. Jack, on receiving the money, called Rixon a rogue. Upon

this a fight ensued, which was terminated by Felter's seizing a wood-cutter's maul which was lying near, and striking his adversary a violent blow in the forehead which fractured his skull, killing him instantly.

It were vain to attempt to describe the feelings of the homicide, when the horrid nature of the crime which his rash anger had prompted him to commit—the murder of his friend—was realized to his mind. How despicably trifling appeared the cause of quarrel when contrasted with the awful consequences which it had produced! Had all the treasures of earth been his, how willingly would he have given them to see the body, which lay before him bloody and still in death, again move with the vigor and activity of life.

The extremity of his danger, however, allowed but short time for reflection, and called for presence of mind and immediate action. To conceal the body would have availed but little, as discovery must soon have followed. Necessity inspired him with the thought of cutting down a tree in such a manner that it should fall directly across the head of the dead body; and a broken whisky-bottle, placed by the side of the murdered man, with the neck in his hand, was sufficient to confer an air of truth upon the account of Rixon's death which Felter gave to the other wood-cutters on their appearance. He told them that Rixon came into the wood drunk, and, after helping him to fell a tree, ran under it as it was falling, stretching out his arms as if to catch it, shaking at the same time the whisky-bottle in his hand, and shouting and dancing like a madman, and was thus crushed to death.

As Rixon was known to be fond of drink, and was always noisy and wild under its influence, not the slightest suspicion was entertained of the correctness of the story. Felter's evident agitation was attributed to grief for the loss of his friend, and thus the secret remained concealed in his own bosom.

"And now you see, marster," said Jack, in conclusion, "that it was Rixon's ghost that cut the wood that Friday to pay me for the day's work he cheated me out of; and he come too, I know, for me to pay him."

When Jack had ceased speaking, George, the plantation-

hand, who as well as myself had been much moved by the wood-cutter's story, asked me if the Friday Jack spoke of, was the Friday of the first week of his employment. On being answered in the affirmative, he made in substance the following communication :

Jack's wife belonged to a planter who dwells six or seven miles from my residence; on which account he was enabled to visit her but once a week, going on Saturday evening and returning the following Monday morning. In the interval he lived in a small hut near the place of his work. On Thursday, the seventh of December, a little after dark, George called in at Jack's hut to have a half hour's chat; but finding him very ill with a fever, he determined to pass the night with him. The next morning Felter rose, dressed himself, and, without preparing breakfast, proceeded to his work. George, considering him still unwell, endeavored to persuade Jack to stay at home that day. The latter, however, paid no attention whatever to his words, and preserved a moody and abstracted silence. As George's road home lay in that direction, he accompanied Jack to the woods, and saw him cross the ravine and commence the day's work. The strange behavior of the wood-cutter was attributed by the plantation-hand entirely to the influence of fever.

While listening to this communication, my attention had been withdrawn from the mulatto. On its being again turned toward him, I observed that he had swooned. He was removed in a state of insensibility to the nearest negro-cabin, placed in bed, and a physician sent for.

My duty as a magistrate compelled me to issue a commitment against Jack Felter; but he died before it could be executed. His death occurred the day after his confession.

"And so, Mr. Worthington," said Cousin Walter, "it was indeed the wood-cutter's self that you saw."

"Yes," was the answer, "although in a different sense from what I had at one time supposed."

"It is very extraordinary," I remarked, "that the wood-cutter should not have been aware that he himself cut the wood."

"It is, indeed, extraordinary," replied Mr. Worthington. "Science is not yet able to account for such a state of mind."

"What cause, do you suppose," asked uncle, "can be assigned for the mulatto's crossing the ravine, instead of cutting where you had directed him?"

"It is in my power," answered Mr. Worthington, "to account for that fact in a probable manner. Since the events just related, I have visited the scene of Rixon's death; to arrive at which, from the road leading into the forest, I was obliged to cross a ravine. The general resemblance between this spot and that where he had been more lately employed, the coincidence of the Friday occurring on the eighth of December, together with the influence of the fever, without doubt, by vividly recalling the past, produced the hallucination under which the mulatto acted, *viz.*: that the last six years were to him as if they had not been, and that he was again enacting the unassisted wood-cutting of that Friday which was the cause of his crime, his misery, and his premature death."

"I have an indistinct recollection," I remarked, "of having read of cases similar to that of Jack Felter."

"A number of such have been recorded by psychological writers," said Mr. Worthington. "The case most nearly resembling that of Jack Felter is, if my memory is correct, that of a watchmaker's apprentice, related by Martinet. The paroxysms in this instance came on once in fourteen days, 'beginning with a sensation of heat extending from the epigastrium to the head. Confusion of thought ensued, and the entire insensibility to external impressions. His eyes were wide open, but fixed and expressionless. He continued his usual work, and was always greatly surprised on his recovery to find the change in it.'"

Other conversation followed this; but as all of us had begun to feel the lassitude consequent upon the activity of the day we shortly afterward retired to bed, and at an earlier hour than usual.

CHAPTER XL.

SUNDAY MORNING.

Early Rising.—Christianity a Divine Philosophy.—The Immortality of the Soul.—The Object of Christianity.—Sabbath Calm.—A Morning Ride.

THE next morning broke upon us brightly and beautifully. There had been a gentle fall of rain during the night; and nature showed in its increased loveliness the refreshing effects of the shower, of which it had been so much in need. I have always been an early riser; and on this occasion I arose with the sun. Looking through the parlor window, when I came down stairs, I saw Mr. Worthington in the old cherry-tree lane leading to the public road; he was walking slowly away from the house. I called to him to stop, and hastened to overtake him.

"Are you for a morning walk?" I asked, as I came up with him.

"Yes," he answered; "I make it a rule to rise early in order to take a walk before breakfast. I find such a habit refreshing, not only to the body, but to the mind; my perceptions of duty, my thoughts upon all subjects are made clearer by it. I am glad to have this evidence that you also are an early riser."

"It is true," I said, "that I generally rise early; but it is not with me as with you, a question of principle. It is but seldom that I can sleep after the morning light comes into my room. I find, however, my advantage in this habit: I feel, I think, more elasticity in both body and mind on account of it."

We walked along, side by side, in the brightness for a few moments in silence, listening to the music of the birds and enjoying the sweet odors which came to us from every side.

"I have been thinking a great deal, Mr. Worthington," I at length said, "of our conversation of last night. It has open-

ed to me an avenue to a new world of thought. It is remarkable that my mind has received all that you have said with unquestioning faith; no objection to the truth of the doctrines which you teach has presented itself to me. You have shown Christianity to be—as it must be to be true—a divine philosophy, asking no light from any thing, but conferring light upon all things. And now I come to you not as a disputant to question your principles, but as a pupil who is desirous of being instructed. There is one question which has engaged my attention, and to which I can not give an answer satisfactory to myself. How do you prove the soul's immortality? A promise to do so was suggested by you in the beginning of our conversation last night; but all that you proved to me satisfactorily is that the soul or mind is the real man."

"Have you read 'Drew, on the Immortality of the Soul'?" asked Mr. Worthington.

"Yes," I answered; "but I find nothing in that work to satisfy my doubt."

"Why?"

"Because—although I confess that the author evinces much ingenuity—the whole of his argument rests on the fallacy that the mind or soul is a *mere* unity. He says that the body, being complex—that is, composed of bones, muscles, nerves, and many other things—is capable of dissolution; but that the soul, being but one thing, or, as I said before, a *mere* unity, is incapable of decomposition, and is thus immortal. He is mistaken in considering the soul as not being complex; for it is evidently as complex as the body. It is composed of a will and an intellect, and of all the innumerable feelings, thoughts, and sentiments proceeding from the conjunction of these two. Thus, as Drew's whole argument rests upon the soul or mind being a *mere* unity, his whole argument falls to the ground."

"I agree with you entirely," said Mr. Worthington, "and asked the question only for the purpose of seeing your own course of thoughts upon the subject. The Learned Blacksmith said, in one of his lectures, that Adam's wooden plow is immortal. There is an argument for man's immortality condensed, or at least suggested, in this thought. That which

the mind creates is, like the mind, immortal; that which the body creates perishes like the body. The steam-boat, the locomotive, the electric telegraph—all things which manifest to the senses man's creative genius—decay, because the materials of which they are made, and the hands that form them, decay; but their abstract or idea—that is, the mental steam-boat, locomotive, electric telegraph, or whatever it may be, is immortal, because the mental substance of which it is composed and the mind that gave it existence are immortal. Thus every thing in the material or natural world decays; every thing in the mental or spiritual world is eternal. As the germ is in the kernel, so is man in this life. The germ forms a minute image of its proper grain, shrub, tree, or vine in the kernel when hidden in the ground, but only becomes the genuine grain, shrub, tree, or vine when, bursting its earthly covering, it comes into the sunshine. So we, while in the darkness of the present life, are but diminutive images of the genuine men which we become when, throwing aside our earthly life, we come into the light of the eternal world. St. Paul uses this comparison in his Epistle to the Corinthians."

"True," I remarked, "but I never looked at it in that light before."

"Because," said Mr. Worthington, "you had not taken a scientific view of it. It has been too much the custom to consider Christianity and science as being in antagonism to each other. You have been educated into this view by almost every one whom you have heard speak upon the subject expressing such an opinion. What a beautiful and glorious light, on the contrary, would Christianity, properly understood, throw upon the path of the scientific searcher after truth. But, to return to our subject, the very fact that we entertain an idea of the soul's immortality is an evidence of the soul's endless existence. It is contrary to common sense to suppose that we could receive such a thought if it were not a truth. We can not conceive of any thing as existing a hint of which is not given by something that exists."

"If, as you have observed," I remarked, "beauty be the form of truth—as I believe it to be—what you say is true be-

cause it is beautiful. And I note especially that, however high you build into the empyrean of thought, your structure has a firm basis in the world of material facts. But what, after all, is the object of Christianity?"

"I am glad that you asked that question," said Mr. Worth-
ington; "it leads to subjects most accordant with this beau-
tiful Sabbath-day. The object of Christianity is to make
men good, and therefore happy, or happy, and therefore good,
for the goodness and the happiness are so thoroughly blended
that it is difficult to distinguish them in operation. The sa-
cred Scriptures teach us that a good life is necessary to salva-
tion. The deeds, good in themselves, which are done for
the sake of worldly profit, do not by any means constitute a
good life in the proper sense; but the good deeds that are
done from a good heart—in other words, from a sense of duty
toward God and man—these, in the proper sense, constitute a
good life. Thus they err who believe that faith *alone* saves.
St. Paul tells us that faith without charity is nothing. Faith
is the means, charity the end; that is, a true faith in the rules
of life laid down in the holy Scriptures will induce us to lead
a life in accordance with them. Our Lord tells us what is
good for us, and we have faith in Him when we obey His com-
mandments. A life in obedience to his commandments is the
true life of charity. Charity means love, as you are aware,
and we show our charity toward our neighbor by doing to-
ward him whatever is for his real good. 'As ye would that
men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them, for this is
the law and the prophets.' 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy
God with all thy mind, and with all thy heart, and with all
thy strength. This is the first and great commandment; and
the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as
thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and
the prophets.' Loving the neighbor is acting honestly and
sincerely toward him in all respects, and seeking to advance
his real good. If all were to act so, there would be no un-
happiness in the world, and he who acts from this principle,
even as the world is constituted, will find happiness for him-
self—the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ—a peace that the

world can not give. Peace is the delight of innocence, for it comes to innocence alone, and is the very essence of all happiness."

"How gloriously beautiful are the truths of Christianity when understood," I said. "All that you say seems to me so apparent, so to shine upon the face of Christianity, that I am astonished, as interested in the subject as I have been, that I have not seen them before."

By such conversation did Mr. Worthington demolish the temple of skepticism in which I had long offered an idolatrous worship. I fear that there are many of my readers who will not take interest in this subject; yet I can not be content without presenting others with a gift that was to me the source of so much happiness. Who can say but that some skeptic, who, like myself, has wandered in the paths of darkness, may be guided by some of the foregoing passages into a way where there is light? Certain it is that infidelity is being constantly scattered broadcast in the fields of the Church. Let the seeds of truth be scattered so, too.

We returned to the house to be in time for breakfast. Every thing that we met on our way spoke of the Sabbath tranquillity: the golden hue of the sunshine seemed to be softer, the shade to be cooler, because it was the day of rest. We met a group of the plantation-hands, who, having to walk to church, had already taken breakfast and dressed in their Sunday clothes, and with faces in which shone a subdued cheerfulness were wending their way to the place of worship. There were elderly men and elderly women, young men and young women, and a few of the larger children, all seeming very bright and contented. The women "courteised," the men touched their hats to us as we passed, all with a "Good-morning, marster."

Immediately after breakfast I mounted Lady Lightfoot to keep my engagement with Lizzie. Cousin Walter was to go with me as far as Fairview to accompany the ladies there to church: this office he was in the habit of making a Sunday duty. When we mounted our horses at the horse-rack, Uncle Porringer and Crowley were already engaged in harnessing

the horses to the family carriage to take Uncle Weatherby, Aunt Mary, Cousin Lucy, and Cousin Jack to church. Mr. Worthington's horse was also fastened to the rack. Uncle Porringer was to drive the coach, and Crowley, on Pacolet, to act as outrider, and open the gates on the way. The female house-servants attended worship on alternate Sundays.

CHAPTER XLII

GOING TO CHURCH.

At Crystal Cove.—On the Way.—Modern Chevalrie.—A little mysterious.—Major Sullivan and Party.—“Come-hither”-ing.—Old Pedigrees.—The Philosophy of the Sun.—The Latin Scholars.

WHEN I arrived at Crystal Cove I found them on the point of starting. Mrs. Dalton, little Will and his nurse, and Mr. Morton occupied the family carriage. Lizzie, in compliance with her engagement with me, was on horseback.

“We expected you to breakfast, Clarence,” said Lizzie, when the greetings had been exchanged, “and had almost given you up. We were just debating whether Mr. Morton should have his horse saddled to accompany me, or whether I should go in the carriage. It gets warm so rapidly that an early start is necessary to avoid the heat of the day.”

“I thought,” I said, “that I would be in time. I hope that I have not delayed you.”

“Not much,” she answered.

For a mile or so we had the road to ourselves; but after that we were joined or passed by, from side roads, or overtak and passed, on the main road, passengers on foot, on horseback, or in carriages; and before we reached the mouth of the lane leading to Old Delight the road was thronged, and we were moving in a crowd. Although it was the Sabbath-day, the scene was a joyous one; look where you would you saw no sad countenances. The ground being well moistened by the rain that had fallen the night before, there was no

dust; yet it was annoying to be in the crowd, especially on account of the young gentlemen who, desirous to exhibit their horsemanship before the beauty of St. Joseph's Creek, frequently dashed by us at speed, or suddenly reined their prancing steeds to let us pass. I saw more than one of them check their horses violently, and touch them in the flank with the spur, to make them rear. Among this number I noted young Rollin, who was remarkable for his awkward bearing and his handsome steed.

"As we are to pass this day together, Lizzie," I said, "and, therefore, belong for the present only to ourselves and to each other, it appears to me that we have a right to press forward and to get out of this crowd."

We had left Mrs. Dalton's carriage some time before.

"I have no objection," she answered, adding with a smile, "but I doubt whether we *can* get out of the crowd. Chittering Neck feels this much of the progressive spirit of the age, that no one likes to be left behind in a race like this."

Her impression proved on trial to be correct; we soon found that in this respect, as in most instances, it was easier to will than to do. Nevertheless, we were relieved to some extent; such animals as Lady Lightfoot and the light jennet which Lizzie rode, when placed upon their mettle, were not to be kept up with by the ordinary hacks on the road. The most annoying portion of our customers, however—the young men—being for the most part mounted on fine horses, were not to be so easily disposed of. After having gained a considerable distance in advance of the main body of the crowd, we drew in our reins and moved at a more leisure pace. Some three or four young men were a short distance behind us. Among them was young Rollin; the rest were strangers to me. They seemed to be in an animated mood, and were engaged in a lively conversation. In a pause of the talk between Lizzie and myself I thought that I heard my own name pronounced by one of them. In order to be heard by each other above the sound of the clattering hoofs, they were evidently speaking more loudly than they were aware of. I overheard the following words:

"If I were in Rollin's place," said one of them, "I would not submit to it. What! let a youngster from Baltimore, a total stranger, come here, and at once take possession of his sweetheart in this way? It is unbearable."

"And she the prettiest girl in the Neck, too," added another, "and, as to that matter, the prettiest in the county."

"That last speaker is a young man of sense, Lizzie," I said, "I shall seek his acquaintance."

"Do you know, Clarence," she replied, with a bright smile, "that you are a great flatterer?"

"There is no flattery in that, I am sure," I answered; "truth is no flattery."

We here overheard more of the conversation of the young men.

"Come, Rollin, ride up on the other side of Miss Lizzie, and outtalk him."

"Nonsense," answered Rollin; "all of us together, could not keep up with him in talking. He is immensely endowed with the 'gift of the gab.'"

"Use a more elegant phrase," said another, "and say, '*ca-coethes loquandi*.' By-the-by, I'll tell you what you *can* do, Rollin; ride up alongside of Audley, and strike the animal which he is riding, as if accidentally instead of your own. I know that Lady Lightfoot of Mr. Weatherby's; she'll be off like a shot from a gun."

"That would be rude," replied Rollin; "and besides, it might frighten Miss Lizzie's mare."

"I see," was retorted, "you are afraid to do it. That youngster has a fiery look; and perhaps you think it would be rather dangerous to meddle with him."

"I am not afraid of any thing," said Rollin, angrily; "and that I will soon prove to you."

"Lizzie," I asked, "are you alarmed?"

"Yes," she answered; "let us ride fast again, Clarence, and try to get clear of them."

"There is an easier way than that," I said. "Tighten your rein a little, and let them come nearer."

She looked into my face, and seeing only a smile there, did

as I requested. This conversation between Lizzie and myself was rapidly uttered ; and our horses were checked almost at the very moment of speaking.

" Gentlemen," I said, as the young men came nearer, " we are overhearing you."

There was much confusion apparent among them ; and they almost instinctively checked their horses, showing that they wished to be out of our company as soon as possible. No one of them said a word. Taking advantage of this pause on their part, after I had made them a low bow, my lovely companion and I, loosening our reins, were soon out of sight of the culprits.

" One of those young men, Lizzie," I observed, smiling, " called you young Rollin's sweetheart. Did you hear it ?"

" Yes," she answered ; " but it is news to me. How silly in you, Clarence," she continued, with a smile, " to say any thing of such a remark."

" I am about to do something which, I fear, you will consider still more silly," I rejoined, " to make a proposition to which you have already expressed dissent. I can not bear to be in doubt concerning any thing in which I feel an interest. In my case ' Hope deferred maketh the heart sick' indeed. I do not think, dear Lizzie, that there can be any doubt entertained—after the manner in which your mother acted toward me at the festival yesterday—of her assent to the fulfillment of our hopes. Did she not call me her son, her dear son ?"

Lizzie, to my discomfort, looked serious. That expression, however, soon vanished from her face.

" Did you not say just now, Clarence, that you can not bear doubt, and did you not conclude by adding that there can be no doubt ? What more can you wish ?" She said this smilingly ; but the smile was not a pleasant one, there seemed to be some uneasiness in its expression.

" I want your mother's outspoken consent, dear Lizzie," I answered seriously. " Besides, she has the right to know the state of things between us."

" Clarence," she answered with equal seriousness, " I have

two requests to make of you. One is, that you will say nothing to our parents about our engagement until I give you leave to do so. The other is, that you will not ask me why I make this request, and," she added with an arch and winning smile, "that you will nevertheless continue to love me as much as you can. Have you not this much confidence in me, dear Clarence? I have a reason for what I ask."

What answer could I make to such an appeal from the person whom I loved most of all on earth, and who at the moment of making it seemed, in the gorgeous radiance of her youthful loveliness, as if surrounded by a sacred halo. It seemed like profanation that I, on whom this beautiful being had deigned to bestow her love, should refuse to consent to whatever she demanded.

While engaged in this conversation we had slackened the pace at which we had been riding, for three reasons, either of which would have been sufficient: first, that we might talk more at our ease; secondly, because we were passing along a cool piece of forest road; and, thirdly, because we saw a party on horseback, consisting of several persons, just ahead of us proceeding at a leisurely gait. As we now noted that a considerable part of the crowd behind, which had been constantly increased by accessions from the different side-roads, was gaining ground upon us, of two evils we chose the least by pressing forward again to join the smaller party in advance. It proved to consist of Major Sullivan, his two nieces, Mr. Travers, and a negro man. The last mentioned accompanied the major's party to open the gates; for the number of which Chittering Neck, as indeed the whole county, is remarkable. Travers seemed, on this occasion, to have changed places with Cousin Walter, who—though inclination would have led him to the major's—had performed what he had imposed upon himself as a regular duty in going to Fairview to accompany the ladies to church. A desire to see, for some sufficient reason, a person who lived on the direct road from St. Joseph's to the church, had, it appeared, caused Mr. Travers himself to make the present occasion a departure from the habit into which he had recently fallen—of going also to Fairview on Sunday

morning to accompany Mrs. Wilton and her daughters—or, to speak more specifically, Miss Jane to the parish church.

"Upon my word," said the old major, looking admiringly at Lizzie and me, after pleasant greetings had been exchanged between our respective parties, "you are a fine-looking couple on horseback. And, now that I come to notice it, young Audley, you are a 'right down' good-looking young fellow. But, I say, you musn't get vain, though; I always think every body handsome whom I like."

Lizzie was, indeed, a beautiful object, with her long sweeping skirts, her loose curls of jet-black hair flowing out from under her broad leghorn flat—the fashionable summer riding-hat of the day—her sweet and lovely face, and exquisite figure; and she managed her handsome little blooded mare with graceful skill.

"I declare, major," said Travers, "you are fully entitled to your Irish name, if the ability of putting your 'come-hither' upon people is of any account. See how delighted Audley looks!"

I was smiling because I was thinking of Lizzie in connection with my being pronounced good-looking.

"I say, you young New Yorker—since you will not answer to Yankee"—said the major with his mock heroic look, and some real warmth, I thought, "I have been in this country upward of two hundred years, sir—that is, I mean to say, my family have been; and I am, therefore, neither Irish, English, Dutch, French, Spanish, nor any thing else but American 'out and out,' sir. Can you boast of such a descent as that, young man?"

"If any dependence is to be placed upon the records of my family," answered Travers, with amusing pomposity of manner, "we came in with the Northmen; and my first ancestor on this continent was the comrade in arms of that valorous leader whose skeleton has been found, still cased in battle harness, on the sands of

"'The wild New England shore.'"

The answer created a laugh at the major's expense. The

old gentleman seemed not to relish either the rejoinder or the merriment; for his family descent was a subject of pride to him.

"I say, young Audley," he said; "speaking of Yankees always reminds me, somehow, of horses, or of some other of the lower order of animals. Walter Weatherby was telling me yesterday evening of your having conquered Lady Lightfoot there, that would not let any white person ride her. She seems gentle enough now. You had to use the whip pretty freely, I suppose, eh?"

"No, sir," I answered, "I did not use the whip at all."

"Right," said the major.

"And he leaped her afterward over the lane gate, which is more than five feet high," said Lizzie.

The major gave a sly look at Lizzie, who blushed with consciousness. He and Miss Bettie were riding between us and Mr. Travers and Miss Susan; the servant boy—some twenty-five or twenty-six years old—lingering in the rear, and going ahead only when there was a gate to be opened. The old gentleman leaned back and extended his hand to me.

"Give me your hand, youngster," he said; "I like these daring young fellows who are not afraid of any thing. And I like the young girls, too," he added, with another arch look at Lizzie, "who admire them."

During all his talk since the laugh about Travers's ancestors, the major had carefully avoided looking at that gentleman.

"Come, major," said Travers, "'neber min' long er me,' as the negroes say. I am sorry that I said any thing to wound your feelings."

"Nonsense, youngster," said the major, fully appeased by this apology; "do you take me for one to get offended at a joke?"

"I have a better joke than that to tell you," said Travers, "about something that happened some time before I met you this morning. You know, perhaps, that Jarboe, on account of his being able to translate into English the first three lines of Cordery, as he calls that author, claims to be a Latin schol-

ar. Lucas and I, almost immediately after we left St. Joe's this morning on our way to church, overtook Jarboe and a number of his acquaintances, male and female (they all *naturally* look up to Jarboe as a genius, Audley), wending their way on foot to the meeting-house."

"What has become of Lucas?" interrupted the major.

"He changed his mind about going directly on to church," was the answer, "and, when we came to the cross-roads, took the Neck road to accompany the Fairview ladies. I suspect he had such an end in view at first, as he insisted on our starting fully an hour sooner than needful. He is with those ladies now, I suppose, somewhere on ahead of us, as I stopped on my way a long time talking with some folks on the road and at the meeting-house. But to go on with my story. When we overtook Jarboe, he was, as usual, learnedly expatiating to his companions on one of his favorite topics. His concluding words as we came up, were, 'Tis your own observatory, ladies and gentlemen, that the sun ascends up in the east and then ascends down in the west; and they can't fling him nowhere else.' 'Mr. Travers,' he said to me, as he observed us, 'what ar your idee of the philosophy of the sun? Do you believe in the new fandangle notion about the yearth making its own revulsions around the sun upon its own axletree? I don't see no axletree; where is it? show it to me.' I foolishly endeavored to explain the matter to him; but all that I could get from him was 'Axes you call 'em! Is they axes to cut the way? I don't see 'em—where ar they? But I see the sun a going around the yearth every day; and you can't fling him nowhere else.' I regretted that I had had any thing to say to him on the subject; but it would not do to give up; for it would injure my standing as a teacher with a certain class of 'the people' if I should surrender to Jarboe. A happy idea occurred to me: he would not, of course, acknowledge his ignorance of Latin before his friends. 'Jarboe,' I said, 'you forget that Horatius Flaccus, in his ode "*Ad Virgilium*," says, as *you* will acknowledge—

"*Insanientis dum sapientæ
Consultus erro; nunc retrorsum*

Vela dare, atque iterare cursus
Cogor relictos.'"

Of course, I 'swelled' the pronunciation to the utmost, so as to give it the most pompous sound, and, therefore, the most influence upon Jarboe and his friends. Perhaps Mr. Audley, who has a 'happy facility' that way, will render the passage into English for the ladies."

"In the sense in which you used it," I said, "it signifies, in a general way, that he was not so wise as he had thought, and would have to retreat from the position which he had taken."

"Exactly what I meant," said Travers. "'Had I thought sooner of that authority, Jarboe,' I continued, 'there need have been but little said.' 'Sure enough,' he answered, with some confusion, and falling readily into the trap, 'I overlooked that.' 'I think it settles the question in my favor,' I observed, determined not to spare him. 'Yes,' he said, with evident reluctance though, and speaking 'like other people' in the confusion of his defeat, 'I believe you are right, after all.' I will wager that the learned constable does not talk any more against the earth revolving on its axis, or any where else."

"I say, young Audley," said the major, "I will tell you how Jarboe 'came by' his reputation among his comrades as a classical scholar. He was speaking one day, in his usual pompous way, of something that occurred 'when he was learning Latin,' when he was interrupted by an Irishman, named Carey, who keeps a small school somewhere among the piny woods in the lower part of the county, who ridiculed the idea that there ever existed any body so stupid as to think of putting Jarboe to one of the learned languages. Jarboe boldly offered to wager that he 'knew more Latin' than Carey; which wager was accepted on condition that Jarboe should begin the assault. It happened that precisely the same three lines were all that either knew of the language of Rome. 'Quid agis?' asked Jarboe. 'Repeto mecum,' answered Carey. 'Quid repetis?' said Jarboe. No response was forthcoming; and the victory was assigned to the constable. Ever since that time his associates have looked upon him as a very learned man, his proficiency in the classics being acknowledged."

"It seems to me, Uncle Thomas," observed Miss Susan, who, I had noticed, had merely smiled when others laughed, "that Sunday is scarcely a proper day for telling 'good jokes,' as you call them."

"You are on the right side, Susan," said the major; "but there is no harm in an innocent jest on any day. I have the parson's example to justify me in saying so. One of the best jokes I have heard for many a day he told me himself last Sunday, as he was going with me home to dinner. I can not tell it to you now, for here we are at the church."

CHAPTER XLII.

AT CHURCH.

Description of the Church.—Neighborly Greetings.—A new Move of Miss King's.—A beautiful religious Service.—The Sermon.—The Imagination.—Man's regenerative Faculty.—Mrs. Macgregor.

THE church was a small brick building of venerable appearance, having the date of its structure, 1738, exhibited, upon the gable end that faced the road, in bricks burned to a darker color than those of which the edifice was composed. It was an oblong-square building, with high peaked 'roof. A low porch projected from under the eaves on each side, giving its ground plan the form of a cross. One of these porches was walled up, and used as a tiring-room for the minister. The other, and a door in the front gable, afforded the worshippers entrance to the interior. Over the front gable was a small belfry containing a bell, from which a rope depended to the ground on the outside of the building. Within, the altar filled a semicircular recess on the eastern side, and on the north side was the old-fashioned high and narrow pulpit, nearly opposite the door of the open porch. The rest of the floor of the church was occupied by the pews and aisles. The pews were separated from each other by high and straight perpendicular paneling, and each of them had seats on all sides except the one toward the pulpit. A gallery for the negroes

was to the right of the pulpit; there was no gallery for a choir—the singing in country churches at the time of which I write was usually performed by the congregation.

This interesting little chapel—affecting as a record of the piety and architectural taste of our forefathers—stood on the edge of the summit of a gentle eminence, in the midst of a grove of large and beautiful oak-trees much older than the building itself. In the part of the grove opposite to the points of entrance were a number of tombstones, of every color in which Time paints marble, standing or leaning in a variety of positions. There were also ruder stones not chiseled into shape, some without inscriptions of any kind, others with roughly sculptured initials; and even a number of wooden grave-posts, some neatly, others awkwardly hewn, some with letters carved upon them, others without, some still firm and solid, others in the various stages of decay. The grass among the graves was tall and rank of growth; that in the more frequented parts of the grove was short and of smoother surface.

A number of “horse-blocks” (steps cut into the solid round of a tree-body, and used for mounting to or descending from horse-back) were placed here and there in the shade. Assisting the ladies to dismount, we handed the reins to Major Sullivan’s negro boy, who fastened the horses to the drooping branches of the trees, and then went off to join a group of his fellow-servants who stood at a little distance from the “white folks.”

The shade of the wide-spreading oaks was very agreeable after riding in the hot sun. The church-goers were gathered through the grove in groups of half a dozen or so each; and these groups were continually breaking up or re-forming, as their members passed from one to another of them, when newly arrived acquaintances were recognized and saluted. Looking around us, we observed that the folks from Old Delight had arrived, and that at a little distance from us were Mrs. Wilton and her daughters and Miss King, attended by Lucas and Cousin Walter. Greetings were interchanged among us all; and then Major Sullivan and his niece joined Uncle Weatherby and his suite, while Travers, Lizzie, and I added

ourselves to the Fairview party. Miss Teresa King, to my surprise, met me very graciously. She had come a little in advance of the others to meet us; and thus, when she addressed a question to me which arrested my progress, we stood somewhat apart from the rest.

"How did you enjoy yourself at the *fête* yesterday, Mr. Audley?" she asked, in a kind and gentle voice.

"Very much, indeed," I answered, somewhat surprised. "I hope that you also had a pleasant time?"

"My enjoyment was marred," she said in a low tone, "by something which I heard there—something which you certainly ought to know, but which I, perhaps, should be the last person to tell you."

"I hope that it was nothing to my discredit, Miss King?" I observed, smiling confidently.

"Nothing to *your* discredit," she answered, "but, if I am not mistaken, much to the discredit of some one else; and on this account I am afraid that my interference at all in the matter may be much misunderstood."

"It seems to me, Miss Teresa," I remarked, "that, if it concerns me, I have a right to know to what you allude. Can I learn it in any other way than from yourself?"

My tone and manner were all the time light, and calculated to show that I felt an interest in the affair only from politeness, and since it seemed to interest her; for, in truth, I thought that she was but working out some scheme.

"You may learn," she answered, "by inquiring of Mr. Morton. But then you will not know what to ask of him unless I tell you; and so I feel it to be my *duty* to tell you. Are you aware, Mr. Audley, that Miss Lizzie Dalton is engaged to Mr. Morton? From your apparent interest in that young lady," she added, I thought, somewhat sneeringly, "I should think that the information will be of some concern to you."

I never for a moment put any faith in this story, but seeing at once that such a report, especially in the hands of Miss King, was calculated to do great injury to Lizzie, my cheeks flushed and my eyes flashed. Considering Miss King, however, as not by any means a friend to either Lizzie or myself, a

moment's reflection showed me the danger of exhibiting any feeling on the subject.

"How can the affair," I asked, with indifference of manner assumed by an effort, "be of any consequence, Miss King, to you or myself?"

"I have the best authority for what I say," she answered, with some confusion of manner, and then added, with an appearance of more calmness and with strong emphasis, "I am much mistaken in Mr. Audley's *character* if 'the affair,' as you call it, is not of interest to him."

I blushed with consciousness at being aware of being guilty of a subterfuge, though the circumstances seemed to justify it, and Lucas's joining us at the moment was a great relief to me. I felt a greater relief, because it concerned a more important matter, when, on the arrival of the carriages from Crystal Cove, Mr. Morton saluted me not only courteously but kindly.

The people remained scattered about in groups, engaged in conversation, for some time longer, but the sound of the church bell at length called them to worship. Some few, I am sorry to say, remained conversing under the trees during all the service-time; but by far the greater part, among whom were all the females present, entered the church.

What a beautiful composition is the ritual of the Episcopal Church, and how calculated to elevate to a devotional state the feelings of the congregation. The service was read and responded to with the decorum and impressiveness for which the worship of that church is remarkable. The sublimity of feeling shadowed forth in many faces, and the seriousness expressed in all, even those in the colored people's gallery, showed that the hearts of the congregation for the most part were, for the time, at least, engaged in the worship. In the face of the minister, an elderly and venerable-looking man, humanity and simplicity of character were plainly expressed. His sermon was not a doctrinal but a practical one, and calculated to improve the moral condition of his hearers. Such sermons, I think, do the most good; their influence is to draw together the hearts of Christians of all sects; for faith separates, char-

ity unites. If the object of all religious doctrine be, as it certainly should be, to make mankind better, sermons that teach life's practical lessons of goodness are assuredly the best for the general mind. The preacher's mind was of no high order as to intellect, but he evidently earnestly desired to do good to his people, and therefore did do them good. So far as I was concerned, the sermon deepened the impression already made upon me by my conversations with Mr. Worthington. I can still recall the pure delight with which the devotional feelings awakened by the service gradually filled my mind. Nor did the worldly feelings which mingled with the devotional dim the purity of that delight, as I heard the low breathing of Lizzie at my side, and her sweet and musical voice softly uttering the responses. "Thus," I thought, "will we go through life together; 'thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.'" My faith and thankfulness toward Heaven and my love and tenderness for the dear being beside me mutually increased each other. How sweet are the imaginings of youth, especially if they are such that the smiles of approving Heaven may shine upon them. Our eyes met as we arose to leave the church, and those magnetic telegraphs of the spirit told us at once that our feelings and aspirations were mutual.

I do not wish to be understood as intimating that the elevation of mind and tranquillity of spirit that generally come to us when engaged in Christian worship should afford any evidence to ourselves that we possess genuine moral purity and goodness of life. Those who experience the feelings I speak of can, if at all, be but temporarily recipients of such a belief, for it can be understood how that even hypocrites may for a time be elevated to such a state of feeling. But it seems that the Almighty allows us upon such occasions to experience for a while the blessedness of religious peace and purity—our evil inclinations losing for the time their influence—that in our ordinary states of mind the memory of that blessedness may induce us to long for it and strive to make it our own permanently. Thus, imagination, that glorious gift generally so little valued, and by many so decried and ridiculed, is in

truth man's regenerative faculty; for, incited to action by even temporary religious emotions, it points the way to higher and—as we strive, always with some success, to realize its suggestions—still higher states of purity and goodness.

After church was "over" the people still lingered for a while in the consecrated grove, pressing and answering invitations to dinner or for longer visits, or bidding good-by's; but at length, first the foot-passengers, and afterward those who traveled on horseback or in carriages, alone or in groups, began to move away, and the house of God was left to its week-day solitude.

Lizzie and I had scarcely left the church before we were greeted by Mrs. Macgregor and the sweet little Eveline, who had arrived too late for us to have an opportunity of speaking to them before the commencement of the service.

"I am glad," said the interesting young widow, with an arch smile, "that my scheme for catching both of you at once succeeded so well. When I sent a boy the other day with a note to Lizzie, requesting her to come and see me to-day, and bring her beau, I confess that I had a good hope of securing you, Mr. Audley."

I suppose that what she saw in our faces encouraged Mrs. Macgregor to make this remark, and to give some archness to the expression of it. Both Lizzie and myself blushed, it is true, but the blushes indicated no reception of offense.

Mr. Travers and Cousin Walter accompanied Miss King and Miss Jane Wilton to an acquaintance's in the neighborhood of the church. Mr. Lucas, as I learned afterward, had been called upon by Mr. Morton to go to the county-seat in company with the latter-named gentleman. They had secured Dr. Turner's buggy in exchange for the young lawyer's horse. Mr. Travers had been requested by Mr. Lucas to take his place with Miss King, the plea of sudden and urgent business having been given to the lady by the young lawyer. The rest of our friends returned to their respective homes.

CHAPTER XLIII.

INDIAN CREEK.

The old House across the water.—The Indian Creek Tragedy.—The rival Families.—Love, Jealousy, and Murder.—The Crow Island Tragedy.—The blood-stained Floor.—Pleasanter Themes.

THE dwelling-house at the “The Levels”—the name of Mrs. Macgregor’s residence on Indian Creek—was a two-story frame building, with brick gables, and having a wide piazza fronting the river. It stood on the bank of the creek near to its junction with the Clearwater, and commanded a view of a wide reach of the smaller stream, and of miles up and down the broad river in front.

The day growing more and more intensely hot and sultry as the afternoon advanced, the young widow, Lizzie, and myself removed from the parlor into the piazza, which was shaded by the high, wide trees that were scattered through the yard in such a manner as not to conceal the best points of view. Shortly afterward I noticed upon the opposite side of the creek a large double two-story frame building, with brick gables, like the dwelling at “The Levels,” and having several irregular additions, made to it probably at different times. It stood in the midst of tall Lombardy poplars, and had an antiquated and dreamy appearance.

“That old house across the water,” I observed, “looks mysterious, as if it might tell old-time histories of a weird or tragic character.”

“It has a right to such an appearance,” said Mrs. Macgregor; “Eveline’s granduncle was murdered there.”

“Will you tell us how it occurred?” I asked.

“With you and Lizzie,” said the young widow, smiling, “I should talk of more cheerful subjects; but the curiosity of the young, when once aroused, must be satisfied; and, besides, I remember hearing you say on the packet-boat that you were fond of old-time traditions.”

After a short and thoughtful pause, Mrs. Macgregor began her narrative as follows:

"The house on the other side of the creek and a large estate adjoining belonged, at the time when the tragedy to which I have made reference occurred, to a widower, considerably advanced in years, of the name of Tiernay. The family consisted of himself, an old maiden sister who kept house for him, and his three grown-up sons. Their name was one of the oldest in the state; and father and sons were—as their ancestors had been, as far back as tradition records—remarkable for sternness and strength of character, as well as for violent passions and laughtlessness of demeanor. Will, in whatever guise it presents itself, always possesses power; and the Tiernays were, therefore, notwithstanding their pride—a trait generally so repellent in a republic—one of the most influential families in the country.

"The Macgregors, on the contrary, were endowed with but little strength of character, yet were distinguished for personal courage. Their demeanor also was more open and candid than that of the Tiernays, and they were therefore beloved, while the Tiernays were feared. As these were the two most influential families in the Indian Creek Hundred, and were, moreover, always opposed in politics, a traditional jealousy always existed between them. This state of feeling had never led to an open rupture, however, as singular as such a fact may appear, and the families had always been upon visiting terms. This state of truce was due, I think, but I may be prejudiced in this opinion, mostly to the amiable character of the Macgregors, their candid demeanor toward their neighbors, their careful avoidance of committing or speaking any wrong of them, and also their never taking any offense unless assured that it was meant.

"Such was the state of things previous to the occurrence to which I have referred. 'The Poplars' then belonged to Aylmer Tiernay, a widower of some fifty years of age, and 'The Levels' to Bruce Macgregor, a young man about twenty-six years old. Both proprietors had been paying attention to the same young lady; and, as there was youth, good looks,

and cheerful manners on one side, and age, homeliness, and a gloomy bearing on the other, it is not wonderful that the bachelor was preferred to the widower. Nor is it strange that one of Aylmer Tiernay's character should have felt his defeat bitterly; pride and wounded affection, in such a nature, alike tended to such a result. Still no open breach took place, and they continued to visit each other as formerly.

"One day a large party of ladies and gentlemen were gathered at 'The Poplars,' among whom were Bruce Macgregor and his intended bride. Those little indescribable somethings in looks and tones and unconscious smiles which intimate mutual love to their objects, but are seldom noted by others, are nevertheless always open to the scrutinizing eyes of a watchful jealousy. No doubt there were passages of this kind that wrought up to phrensy the jealous nature of Aylmer Tiernay, already almost maddened by his rejection and his rival's success.

"The day was a warm one in early summer, and the company had been confined by the heat to the house and the shade of the trees in the yard. But when the atmosphere had grown cool and pleasant with the declining sun some one proposed a walk to the river-shore, and the proposal was unanimously acceded to. As the company was about to leave the house for this excursion, old Mr. Tiernay requested Bruce Macgregor to remain a little while, as he had something particular to say to him. His manner was so smiling, when he made the request, that no one suspected that any wrong was intended; and the company started off on their walk, the air musical with their laughter and their sallies of wit and humor. They had been some time loitering under the trees on the river-bank or rambling along the shore, and were beginning to wonder at the prolonged absence of their host and Macgregor, when a servant, who had run in great haste and excitement from the dwelling-house, came to tell them that the body of the latter lay dead in the garden at 'The Poplars,' and that their host himself had been seen, some time before, to ride away on his fleetest horse. Such they found, on returning to the house in haste and grief, to be the fact. Bruce Macgregor had been stabbed to the heart, and must have died instantly.

The murdered young man had two brothers, both of whom were present. They immediately mounted their horses and started in pursuit. The chase was vain, however. They never saw Aylmer Tiernay alive afterward, although they traveled apart through different sections of the country, wherever vague rumor guided them, in search of him.

About a year afterward the dead body of the murderer was brought to the county, and quietly interred in his family burial-ground. He had hidden himself in a retired part of Virginia, and had died there with no one to attend his hours of sickness but an old negro man, his body-servant, who had learned the way to his master's retreat, it is thought, through a communication from the latter to one of his sons. The brothers of the murdered man, it is said, opened Aylmer Tiernay's grave and looked at his body, to assure themselves that he was dead, and that the funeral had not been a mere pretense to put a stop to their search after him."

"What became of young Macgregor's affianced?" I asked.

"She fainted on that occasion," answered Mrs. Macgregor, "and was in bad health and spirits for a long time afterward; but in a few years she was married to a young gentleman of the neighborhood."

I turned my eyes involuntarily toward Lizzie. She answered with a look that said, as plainly as a look can say, "But *I* will never change."

"What has become of the Tiernay family, Mrs. Macgregor?" asked Lizzie, after a very brief silence. "There is no one of that name living in the county now, I believe."

"They sold out their property after their father's death, and two of them left the county. The youngest, Dr. Tiernay, who remained, died some years ago, leaving no issue. What became of the oldest brother I do not know, except that he removed to the far Southwest. The second brother, now a very aged man, occupies one of the highest judicial positions in the country, and is as distinguished for his humanity as for his talents. He is now, I am told, as remarkable for self-control and gentleness of manner as he was in his younger days for high temper and haughtiness."

"And the Macgregors?" I asked.

"My little Eveline," said the young widow with some plain-tiveness of tone, "is the last representative of the branch of the family of this county. It has another branch in an adjoining county, but they are not numerous."

"The next residence along the river above the Poplars," said Lizzie, "is also distinguished, Clarence, for a tragedy enacted there. It is called 'Crow Island' from a small island in the river that stands nearly in front of the dwelling."

"What is the tragedy, Lizzie?" I asked.

"A Mr. Harold," she said, "who owned the place in the old time, was notorious for a passionate and cruel temper. He was unfeeling toward his family and severe toward his slaves; he appeared, it is said, to take pleasure in the pain of others. One cold and bitter winter he had a quarrel with his overseer, a man of a mild temper named Stewart, and ordered him peremptorily to take his family and leave the plantation. While the overseer was absent trying to rent a house to which he might remove his family, the brutal planter made his slaves throw the furniture out of the overseer's house, and, ordering Mrs. Stewart and her children to leave it, set fire to it and burned it to the ground. The snow lay deep upon the earth when the helpless family were turned out into the freezing air; and, as Mr. Harold refused even to let his pitying slaves receive them into their quarters, Mrs. Stewart and her little ones had to travel some cold and weary miles before they found shelter. The consequence of the exposure was that all of the family became sick, and one of the younger children died. Such was the condition of things when the unfortunate overseer, after succeeding in renting a house, returned to remove his family to it. Maddened by the death of his child and the brutal manner in which his family had been treated, he armed himself with a rifle and proceeded to Crow Island. He met Harold in a field not far from the house, and, after upbraiding him with his cruelty, fired at and mortally wounded him. The planter was taken to the house and laid on the floor in the front parlor; they could not carry him farther on account of the pain which motion caused him. There he died;

and the stain of his blood is still on the boards of the floor. I have seen it—have not you, Mrs. Macgregor?"

"Yes," was the answer; "it is very plainly to be seen."

"Why do they not wash it out?" I asked.

"It can not be washed out," said the widow.

"It is a wonder, then," I said, "that they do not remove the stained boards and replace them with others."

"It is singular," said Mrs. Macgregor. "Perhaps the people who live in the house have become used to the blood-stain being there. It is a fact, however—whatever the reason may be—that the boards have never been removed, and that the stain of the blood is still there."

"What became of Stewart?" I asked. "Was he punished?"

"No," answered Lizzie; "he was not even tried. The governor of the state, upon application by the gentlemen of the neighborhood, and after full inquiry, granted him a—what do you call it?"

"A '*nolle prosequi*,'" I suggested.

"Yes," said Lizzie—"a sort of pardon before trial, I believe."

"A very good definition," I remarked.

"Come," said Mrs. Macgregor, as little Eveline—having finished her after-dinner sleep—came into the piazza, "let us turn to pleasanter themes."

How happily passed those afternoon hours. Little Eveline, who sat upon my knee with her sweet innocent eyes almost constantly looking into mine, would ask every now and then "Am I not your pet, Mr. Audley?" to which I would answer "Yes, sweet one;" when she would relapse into silence again. The waters lay calm before us, not a breath of wind disturbed their tranquillity; they reflected the light softened to such varied hues as our minds gave to the radiant thoughts that came to us from above. Mrs. Macgregor, who with her rare womanly perception had seen at a glance how matters were between Lizzie and myself, knew how to make the winged hours go by, like fragrant winds, freighted with thoughts that suggested the delights of love between congenial natures as the perfume suggests the flower. Moments thus spent in the in-

terchange of thoughts and sympathies between souls that have mutual attraction are landmarks in the chart of the heart's history of life. How often the memory recurs to them ever after; and how dear remain to us—through all life's changes, through even their own changes—those who have partaken with us in the enjoyment of such moments.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE THUNDER-STORM.

The coming of the Storm.—Frightened Horses.—An Accident on the Road.—Arrival of Succor.—Flying from the Storm.—A Family Feud.—Clarence to the Rescue!—A sensible Conclusion.—Uncle Juniper's Preaching.

As the weather was so warm, and still the hours went by so pleasantly, the sun was not more than two hours above the horizon when Lizzie and I mounted our horses to return to Crystal Cove. The young widow pressed us very earnestly to stay till the following morning, saying that there were many tokens of a thunder-storm being at hand; but Lizzie pleaded her promise to her mother, and the uneasiness that would be felt should she stay away from home all night without explanation. For my part, I thought that it was too late in the afternoon for a thunder-gust.

Although our road was for the most part shaded by forest-trees, still the heat was so excessive that, in consideration for our horses, we rode at a slow pace. Not a breath of air was stirring the leaves, no notes of birds were heard; and the sun looked down from the burning sky with that fierce golden glare peculiar to summer-days of excessive heat.

We had traversed some miles, and were approaching the church which lay on our way, when we noticed that the atmosphere was becoming much more bearable; cool breathings of wind refreshed us from the bosom of the forest in which we were riding, or came down upon us through the tree-tops. Even and anon we heard low rumbling sounds like the tones

of distant thunder; but so occupied were we with the conversation in which we were engaged, that we had paid no heed to them. When we arrived where our way passed the church in which we had worshiped that morning, we had, over the open country on that side of the road opposite the grove which sheltered the sacred building, an unobstructed view of the western sky; and then we saw the cause for the change which had taken place in the state of the atmosphere. Low on the horizon were heavy masses of dark clouds in a state of ceaseless agitation, rolling into and involving themselves with each other, and all the while making slow but steady progress up the heavens. Every now and then flashes of sheet-lightning illumined the sky behind, followed by the low but heavy murmuring of distant thunder. The face of my beautiful companion became even paler than usual at the sight.

"Oh, Clarence," she exclaimed, "what if we should be caught in the storm?"

"I have no fear, dear Lizzie," I said, with a hopefulness which I scarcely felt; "it must be an hour, or at least three quarters, before it can reach us, and Old Delight is but six miles off; besides, there are other houses on the way."

I may differ from some men in this respect; but, for my part, I always feel more tenderness, and more attraction generally, indeed, toward those of the other sex who exhibit timidity when physical danger threatens. Such women call forth on such occasions all the chivalry of our manhood. Women who show fearlessness in time of peril, win our admiration, but seldom our love. The true instinct of man's nature—to protect the other sex—is in favor of the former and against the latter.

At my suggestion, we put the animals which we rode to a swift canter, and rapidly left the church farther and farther behind us. I placed myself in such a position regarding the light jennet on which Lizzie was mounted, that, at any moment when it should become necessary, I could place my hand upon her bridle-rein. In the mean time, as we fleeted onward, the light grew dimmer on our road, and the gloom of the forest around us momentarily deepened, showing—though we could

not yet see it for the intervening trees—that the storm was mounting on its cloud-wings higher and higher toward the zenith. The animals which we rode, whose instinct doubtlessly suggested to them what was about to take place, began to become excited, breathing occasionally “hard” through their nostrils, and starting at every quaint object that presented itself in the woods around, or on the road before us. I had no fear of not being able to control Lady Lightfoot, a soothing word, and a hand laid lightly on her mane, had still influence to calm her. But Lizzie was not so self-possessed, and was evidently becoming too terrified herself to be able to control her steed; and I noted with alarm that the jennet was beginning to show indubitable signs of becoming unmanageable. I placed my hand upon her mane, and, speaking to her in a gentle, but firm tone of voice, had succeeded in calming her to some extent, when a blinding flash of lightning, followed almost instantly by a startling and continuous thunder-crash, put her beyond the power of my voice. She made a nervous and violent bound forward, and then dashed along the road at a greatly-increased speed. At the instant I lost my hold upon her rein; for Lady Lightfoot, in addition to the dashing forward of the jennet, also made a violent bound at the same moment. The reader can imagine what I felt at that instant. My alarm on Lizzie’s account would, perhaps, have unnerved me and deprived me of my presence of mind and power to help, but that she called upon me, by the most endearing names, to save her; and that cry strengthened my nerve of mind and body to action.

The jennet had by this time dashed some lengths ahead of Lady Lightfoot; but it seemed almost an instinct of the latter’s nature to let nothing in the form of a horse go ahead of her; and it was scarcely needful for me to speak to her to urge her to her utmost speed.

“Hold firmly to both saddle and reins, dear Lizzie,” I said, with as firm a voice as I could command; “there is no danger if you only be calm and firm. Is not Clarence here to help you?”

The words were scarcely uttered, before I again had my

left hand laid firmly on the jennet's rein. At this moment there was another vivid lightning-flash, succeeded instantly, as before, by terrific and continuous thunder-peals. In my haste and anxiety, fearing that Lizzie might let go her hold and be thrown, I checked the animal so violently—having reined up my own steed at the same time—that, after two or three terrible plunges, she stood so straight upon her hind feet that Lizzie let go both saddle and bridle-rein in her terror.

"Your foot out of the stirrup! Quick!" I exclaimed, in a rapid and decided voice.

Instinctively she followed my directions, and at the same moment fell from her horse.

I had foreseen the issue at the moment of the jennet's rearing, and, as the animals were too far apart—on account of the plunging of the jennet—to allow me to place my arm around my terrified companion in time to prevent her from falling, I threw myself from my horse in order to catch her in her descent. The act of Lizzie's falling and that of my leaping to the ground were so nearly simultaneous that I received at once both the shock of her weight and of mine, and was forced upon my knees. When the accident happened we had left the woods and were in an open field, across which our horses dashed as soon as released, and almost immediately passed out of sight over a hill.

Lizzie continued to lie upon my arm; she had fainted. I thought at first—so hasty are the fears of love—that life was gone from her. Who can imagine my suffering? She, so lately full of sweet girlish life, to look so like a form of death! But the emergency called for action. I knew the place, and that a small stream of water flowed near. Placing my fair burden on the grass by the road-side, and my coat under her head to serve as pillow, I hastened away, and soon returned bringing a little water in my hands, which I sprinkled in her face. She immediately began to revive. With what pleasure I listened to the deep-drawn sighs that told of returning life.

"Mother," was the first word she uttered, "where am I? What is the matter with me?"

"It is I, my darling Lizzie," I said softly, lifting her on my arm, "your own fond Clarence. Are you hurt?"

"Is it you, dear Clarence?" she said in a weak but very tender tone, adding, after a pause, "Ah! now I remember! No, I am not hurt, I think—thanks to your fearless devotion. O dear, dear Clarence, I will tell you all; one so brave and generous should not be deceived."

How those words—bringing to my memory what Miss Teresa King had said that morning, falsely, and in mere malice, I then thought—went through my heart like a sword of fire. Before any explanation could be given we were joined by Miss Jane Wilton and Miss King escorted by Mr. Travers and Cousin Walter. All of them, even Miss King, expressed alarm on coming up to us. The glove upon my left hand had been torn by the strain upon the jennet's bridle-rein, and the hand itself so bruised that the blood had oozed through the rents in the glove and made large stains upon Lizzie's riding-dress. In my excitement and anxiety I had not been aware of this till my attention was called to it.

"Bless my life!" exclaimed Cousin Walter, leaping from his horse, "what has happened, Clarence? Is she hurt?"

I explained the accident to them; and Lizzie, who had now entirely recovered from all but the weakness consequent on the shock to her nervous system, assured us that she was not at all hurt, and had fainted only from terror.

"Come, Weatherby," said Travers, "let us see if we can catch the horses; there is no time to lose. We must hasten and get the ladies under shelter; the rain will shortly come down in torrents."

The horses were soon caught; as we were in an inclosed field, they had not gone far. As the jennet still exhibited much restiveness, Cousin Walter exchanged saddles, and, placing Lizzie upon Bay Surrey, himself mounted the jennet. We then rode onward. As Lizzie was still weak, I so placed myself as to be able to render her assistance in a moment. In regard to her feebleness, we were necessarily obliged to ride slowly at first; but as soon as her recovered strength authorized us to do so, we pressed forward more rapidly. During

all this time the thunder and lightning were almost continually pealing and flashing around us, the clouds growing denser, and the sky darker overhead.

"We shall have to ride in to Patton's, here to the left," said Cousin Walter, pointing to a house on a hill about a quarter of a mile from the road; "it will be impossible to reach Old Delight before the storm will overtake us. The rain will begin to come down in less than ten minutes; and, when it does fall, it will be in such torrents as will drench us in a moment."

"I can not enter Mr. Patton's house," said Miss King; "I have often heard my father say that he and Mr. Patton were not on speaking terms when our family moved to the West. He did my father some wrong in the old time."

"Why, Gracious Heaven! Teresa," exclaimed Miss Jane, "you certainly can not intend to drown us all on account of an old story like that."

Miss King made no answer.

"Far be it from me, Miss Teresa," said Cousin Walter, "to interfere with a question of family punctilio, though it had lasted ten generations instead of one; but it appears to me that present circumstances justify its being laid aside for at least a few hours. See! there comes the rain. Will you have Miss Lizzie, who is already unwell, laid up with a spell of sickness?"

Our road at this point crossed an eminence from which we had a far view over fields and woods toward the west; and we could plainly see the heavy shower afar off, but with a long and regular front rapidly advancing toward us. We had halted on this hill, for here branched off the road leading to Mr. Patton's. Miss King looked in the direction of the storm, and then turned her glance toward the rest of us, looking into each of our faces with a puzzled and doubtful expression. I pitied her perplexity; and, as Travers—her proper escort—made no offer, I spoke.

"If Miss Teresa," I said, "prefers abiding the storm, and will trust herself to my protection, I will accompany her to the next house, or to whatever place she may wish to go. I

am sure that Miss Lizzie will pardon me in such a case, especially as she will be well taken care of by Mr. Travers and Cousin Walter."

"I suppose that I must yield," said Lizzie, with evident reluctance, and yet with a glance of pride at me; "but you will both be almost drowned."

"I declare," exclaimed Miss Jane, "it is the greatest nonsense I ever heard of."

"Upon my word, Clarence," said Cousin Walter, "you are as big a—I beg your pardon, I was about to say something very rude; but this is, indeed, enough to try the patience of a saint."

"Mr. Audley forgets," said Mr. Travers, with a formal bow to me; "it is my place to attend Miss Teresa."

"Mr. Audley," said Miss King, without noticing any of the remarks which had been made upon my offer, "I can find no words to express how much I am obliged to you. You are always kind, always have regard to every body's feelings." And tears came into her eyes. "What would you advise me to do in this case? I leave it to you. Speak as if you were deciding for yourself."

"I am honored by your confidence," I answered bowing, "and say unhesitatingly—Go to Mr. Patton's."

"Be it so," she said.

"Sensibly concluded after all," remarked Cousin Walter, "and not a minute too soon."

He was right; the first large rain drops—*avant-couriers* of the shower—fell as we dismounted at the horse-block. Negro servants, who were waiting for us, took our horses at once to the stable. The family, who had seen our approach, all met us in the piazza with a cordial welcome, and congratulated us on our escape from the shower. Miss King—after she was made known to them—was treated with especial kindness; polite inquiries were made concerning her father's family, as if no misunderstanding had ever existed. The gloom which had deepened upon the young lady's face as we approached the house, gradually cleared off under such genial influence.

"Clarence," said Cousin Walter, as we stood in the piazza

watching the passing away of the storm—the rest of the company being in the house, “you should have heard Juniper preach this afternoon. The negroes had what is called a ‘bush meeting’ (something like a camp-meeting without the tents) half a mile or so on the other side of the church, and a few hundred yards or so from the road, from which it was hidden by close and tall underwood. Hearing the sound of preaching as we were passing by not very long ago—”

“Poor fellows,” I interrupted, “I fear that they have been drenched in the rain.”

“No,” he said; “their meeting-house is close at hand to the place where they were assembled, and, of course, they took refuge in it. Well, we rode softly up to the edge of the underwood, where we could hear without being seen. Juniper was preaching on the subject of slavery. ‘Bredren,’ he said, ‘some uv you maybe think ’tis hard er ’tain’t right dat you should b’long to urrer people, un when marster say “Do dis,” you mus’ do dis, un when he say “Do dat,” you mus’ do dat. Un den maybe you think ’tis hard dat you don’ own nothing, un don’ eben b’long to yo’selves. You is foolish un wicked colored people ef you say dat to yo’selves. Sich thoughts take your ’tention ’way from religion, un make you think more uv dis world den uv de urrer. De blessed Marster above, He knows what is bes’ fur you ; He put you in dis state, un He say to you “Sarvents, be obedient to your marsters.” Ef you be good, you will be happy anyhow; un ef you ain’t good, you can’t be happy whedder you is free ur slaves. Un den de blessed Lord, He put you in dis state, ’cause ’tis de bes’ state fur *you* to git to heaben in; un he put de white folks in a state de bes’ fur *dem* to git to heaben in. All you got to do den is to do your duty to your Heabenly Marster; un you can’t do your duty to your Heabenly Marster widout you do it to your earthly marster.’ He was talking in the same strain when we left.”

“Juniper practices the religion that he teaches,” I remarked, “and in his own person exemplifies the maxim to which he referred, that ‘to be good is to be happy.’”

CHAPTER XLV.

AFTER THE STORM.

What does "all" mean?—A little jealous.—An important Trifle.—A Yankee.—"The Father of Zebedee's Children."—Porringer and the Peddler.

IT was nearly sunset when, the storm having passed away, we bid good-by to our hosts and again took the road to Old Delight. Allowing Cousin Walter and Travers, and the ladies under their escort, to get some distance ahead of us, I had an opportunity of asking of Lizzie an explanation upon the subject that occupied all my thoughts. She evidently expected, and yet did not desire that I should do so; for her manner was nervous and confused.

"Lizzie," I remarked, "you said, on recovering from your swoon, that you would tell me '*all*.' What did you mean by that?"

"Oh! Clarence," she said, "do not, I beg of you, insist upon my answering that question. I can not, I do not know that I have a right to answer it. I should not have said what I did."

"Then there *is* something to explain," I said, very seriously.

"Dear Clarence," she exclaimed, pleadingly, "have confidence in me. Heaven knows that I wish you could look into my heart; you would then see that it loves you and you only."

"Sweet Lizzie," I answered, unable to witness her distress, "I *have* every confidence in you; I should be base indeed to doubt that you love me. But why should there be any mystery between us? Mysteries are not safe between those who love."

"I know it," she said. "Pity me, dear Clarence, without knowing why; I am to be pitied, indeed. You shall know all—but not now. Yet never doubt for one moment that my heart is yours and yours only: and do not refer to this sub-

ject again ; I will tell you without waiting for question when the proper time shall arrive."

"Lizzie," I said, my uneasiness somewhat, but not entirely removed, "I am really ashamed of what I am about to say ; but the subject *will* prey upon my mind, and I do not wish you to think me better than I am : Mr. Morton seems to claim some sort of right in regard to you."

I spoke these last words in some confusion. Lizzie's face at first flushed a little ; but she soon recovered herself and said with a smile,

"What, Clarence, *you* jealous too?"

"*I* jealous too ! What do you mean ?" I asked quickly, my mind immediately reverting to Morton.

"I mean," she answered, "that *I* was a little jealous too, yesterday morning, of Lucy Weatherby. Are you sure that you do not love her a little more than you should in justice to me ?"

"Come, dear Lizzie," I said, "you are only bantering. But why do you say that you were jealous of Cousin Lucy yesterday morning ?"

"Because the way in which I spoke of you seemed to make her low-spirited. Our sex have a very quick perception in such cases."

"But that is no reason why you should be jealous of me ?"

"Lucy is very winsome, Clarence."

"She is, indeed, a sweet girl, but only a child yet, you know."

"Only five years younger than you, sir."

And so we continued in a gay chat. But the question still kept recurring to me, "Was this the cause of Cousin Lucy's singular conduct yesterday morning ?" Lizzie would not have been pleased, perhaps, had she known the feelings to which this reflection gave rise.

Our conversation was interrupted by Cousin Walter ; he and Miss King had checked their horses to allow us to come within hearing. Cousin Walter, by-the-by, knowing the state of Mr. Travers's feelings toward Miss Jane Wilton, had kindly managed to make an exchange of ladies.

"Miss Lizzie," he asked, "do you know whether Mr. Morton returned with your mother to Crystal Cove?"

"I am not certain," was the answer; "but I think that he was not in our carriage when it drove off from the church this morning."

Mr. Travers and Miss Jane had been riding between us and Cousin Walter and Miss King; and though the former couple had passed ahead of the latter when Cousin Walter stopped to question Lizzie, we were all still within hearing of each other.

"I think it is likely," said Travers, "that Morton went to the county-seat; for Lucas told me that he was suddenly required to return home on business of Morton's."

Shortly afterward we arrived at Old Delight; the western sky being still rosy with the hues of twilight.

Cousin Jack was the first to meet us. He hardly waited for me to alight and help Lizzie from horseback before he began to give me the news which had brought him out of the house in such a hurry, that he might be the first to communicate it.

"Oh! Cousin Clarence," he exclaimed, "there is a Yankee peddler here; the longest, lathiest, queerest slab-sided being you ever saw in all your life!"

"What do you mean, Jack," asked Travers, the schoolmaster awakening in him, "by 'lathiest' and 'slab-sided'?"

"Oh, Mr. Travers, *you* know," said Jack, in some confusion. "But, indeed, he is a very queer fellow, and has the funniest way of drawling out his words and speaking through his nose you ever heard."

Uncle Weatherby and the ladies were awaiting us in the piazza. Aunt Mary insisted on the young ladies taking off their riding-dresses and staying with us till next day, at least—an invitation which, after some hesitation, was accepted. Crowley was called from the kitchen, and ordered to saddle a horse and ride to Fairview and Crystal Cove to acquaint the families at those places with this determination.

"Crowley," said Miss King, "let me see you before you go; I wish to send a note by you. Miss Lucy, may I trouble you for writing-materials?"

She and Lizzie retired with Cousin Lucy; the rest of us awaited their return seated on chairs on the piazza. It was very pleasant there; the evening air was cool and agreeable after the rain, and almost burdened with fragrance from the surrounding flowers. Lizzie and Miss King soon returned, the latter with the note of which she had spoken, and which she handed to Crowley, who, hat in hand, was awaiting her on the piazza steps. She spoke a few earnest words to him, and slipped a piece of silver into his hand, as he turned away to perform his errand. Subsequent events made me acquainted with this note. I little dreamed then how important its prompt delivery might be to myself. It ran as follows:

“MR. MORTON,—As you are a gentleman and a man of honor, I adjure you not to act upon the information I gave you at church this morning till I see you again. M. T. K.”

“Travers,” said Uncle Weatherby, “we have a singular visitor here from ‘down East’—a genuine specimen of that species of the human race technically termed ‘Yankee.’ The poor fellow came driving up to the gate an hour or so ago, with his wagon of tin ware, in a great hurry. He was wet to the skin, for the open front of his wagon furnished him but slight protection against the ‘peltings of the pitiless storm.’ I furnished him with a dry suit from my own wardrobe; but—although I am not by any means a very short man—the suit is considerably too short for him; and he presents in them a rather striking picture, to say the least. Your coming interrupted him in the midst of a lecture on the subject of religion; for he affects to be very deeply versed in Scripture. Singular that he does not think of making a better application of his knowledge than to be riding about the country with his load of goods on Sunday. I have a question to ask him, however, that I hope will prove a ‘poser.’ Amanda” (to the negro girl in waiting), “ask the strange gentleman if he will come and take a seat with us in the piazza.”

With what has already been said by Cousin Jack and Uncle Weatherby, the reader needs but little farther description

to have a tolerably correct idea of the individual who soon made his appearance before us. He was a lank, "raw-boned" person, and remarkably long. Though the clothes which he wore, hung upon him in bag-like folds, the pantaloons did not reach much farther than half way between his knees and his ankles; the sleeves of the coat did not quite reach his wrists, and his waist was unusually short. Long, coarse, straight hair of a dark brown color, a thin face with a prominent and somewhat hooked nose, and a pair of small piercing eyes that had a keen look for business, complete his picture.

"Sarvant, gentlefolks," said this quaint figure, without waiting for an introduction; "I swon if it ain't right down pleasant now, arfter the rain; ben all-fired hot to-day, though. Passable shower, squire" (he called uncle "squire"), "good for the craps. But say, squire, about that ere argerment we was having just now."

And on he proceeded, monopolizing the talk to himself.

"My friend," uncle at last had an opportunity of interjecting, "as you claim to be so well acquainted with Scripture, I have a question to ask you."

"Any thing you're a mind to, squire, if it's only in the Scripter."

"Can you inform me of the name of the father of Zebedee's children?"

"Let me see," said the peddler; "'what is the name of the father of Zebedee's children.' Their names was Peter and James. Let me see" (with a puzzled look). "Wall, now, that's what I call tarnation strange that, as often as I've read all about it, I can't tell that. All-fired queer—ain't it?"

"Amanda," said uncle, "see if Porringer is in the kitchen; and, if he is, tell him that I want to see him."

Uncle Porringer soon made his appearance. I thought that I detected a desire on his part to keep as much as he could—without making his effort to do so marked—out of the peddler's sight; for there was still enough daylight by which to recognize a face at near view. The darkness of his complexion was in favor of his object.

"Porringer," asked uncle, "can you tell us the name of the father of Zebedee's children?"

"Lors er massy, marster," said Porringer, with a stifled laugh (for it was not the first time that he had been called upon to take a part in this farce), "I 'spose Zebedee's name wus Zebedee—wusn't it?"

"Wall, squire," said the peddler, very philosophically (he had joined in the laugh), "I reckon you've got the laugh on your side this time; but that there old nigger ain't by a tarnation sight got it on hissen. I say, you old fellow, if I can't see your face well, I guess I know your voice putty slick. You hadn't ought to put me out of my right road to St. Joseph's the way you did an hour or so back; and I've a tarnation great mind tu say it right out here afore the squire."

"What! Porringer," said uncle, sternly, "did you dare to misdirect this gentleman on his road?"

"Marse John," answered Porringer, in the hasty and excited manner peculiar to his race under such circumstances, "ef you'll jes wait er minute, I tell you de whole blessed trufe. You see, marster, I wus er coming from de Indian Creek meeting-house dis arternoon, un when I see dat dere was gwine ter be er thunder-gus, I stopt in at Aunt Sukey's quarter, on ole Marse Jack Smith's place. I wus er standin' in de door uv de quarter lookin' at de sky un seeing de storm come up, when dis here gentlum here drives ullong in his tin-wagon un stops fore de door. Says he ter me, says he, 'Ole man, kin you tell me de road ter Sin Joseph's?' 'Sartinly, sir,' says I; 'you keeps right ullong on dis same road tell you comes ter where it forks, ubabout er quarter uv er mile from here; un den you takes de lef'-hand road.' Den says he ter me, 'I's got so offen out uv de road,' says he—'de roads cross each other in dese parts so all sorts er ways—dat, ef you'll come ullong wid me un put me right in dc right road, I'll gib you er half er dollar,' says he. Yes, indeed, Marse John, dat's jes' what he said. Of course, I said 'Sartinly, marster, wid pleasure, sir;' 'cause he talk den like our gentle folks, marster. Un den I went ullong wid him tuddy forks uv de road, un I puts him right on de lef'-hand road. 'Dere, sir,' says I, 'dat's de road dat'll take you ter Sin Joseph'a.' Den he was er gwine ter drike off widout gibin' me de money.

'Marster,' says I, 'you furgits de half dollar, sir.' 'Go ullong, you ole fool,' says he, 'you ought ter got de money 'fore you showed de way; I don't want you ter show it ter me, now; I knows it myself,' says he. 'Well, den,' says I, 'you kin go ullong; maybe you think I *wus* sich er fool, sure unnuff, us ter put you on de right road 'fore I *wus* paid.' 'Ole man,' says he, 'I think you're one of de wery biggest fools dat I ever seed; ef dis ain't de right road, de udder must be,' says he. Den he turns roun' un drives back un takes de udder road. 'Well,' says I, 'I wunner how long 'twill be 'fore you'll git ter Sin Joseph's by dat road?' But he only laugh un whip up his hoss. Un dat, Marse John, is jes de whole trufe, jes us it took place, sir. Un I didden tell him er bit er story" (falsehood), "marster, de whole time."

"But you told him the truth in such a way," observed uncle, "as to make him disbelieve it; and that, as I understand it, is adding meanness to the sin of falsehood."

"But he didden keep *his* promise, marster."

"The sin of another is no excuse for our own," said uncle. "But you can go now; I shall probably have something more to say to you to-morrow about this affair."

It was very evident from Porringer's subdued expression of triumph, as he made his bow preparatory to returning to the kitchen, that he was not in very great fear of the morrow's lecture.

"See here, old fellow," said the peddler, as Porringer was turning away—probably he felt a little ashamed at the *exposé* that had occurred—"you needn't make such a tarnation fuss about the matter; although you put me out of my right road, which you hadn't ought to do, I mean to pay you in the morn-ing. I rayther guess every body 'll say I've done you justice afore I leave."

It may be remarked here, that at the house of every planter in Chickering Neck, and indeed in the whole county, all comers are hospitably entertained; high and low, rich and poor, the polished and the rude, all are courteously welcomed. The kind of courtesy extended toward them depends, of course, to some extent on the characters and manners of the persons entertained.

The bearing of the peddler was much subdued for the rest of the evening, and he made no farther effort to monopolize the conversation. Pleading fatigue, he retired at a much earlier hour than the rest of the company.

CHAPTER XLVI.

NIGHT AND MORNING.

Promenade and Converse.—Night connects the Past and the Present.—Love is the Life of Nature.—An aside.—Sleep.—The Yankee again.—An active Traffic.—The Peddler pays Porringer.

DURING the evening I proposed a promenade, as the piazza, being both wide and long, furnished excellent convenience for the purpose, and offered my arms to Lizzie and Cousin Lucy, who accepted; the other ladies declined walking. When we again seated ourselves, as our conversation had led us into a mood of thought so different from the light and gay chat into which the rest of the company had fallen, we sat at the farthest end of the piazza from the others.

"How very agreeable," I remarked, as we seated ourselves, "is this cool refreshing air after the heat of the day."

"And how fragrant the breath of the flowers," said Lizzie; "our 'olfactories,' to use a favorite phrase of Dr. Jackson's, absolutely revel in the delightful perfume."

"And the stars are very clear and beautiful to-night," observed Cousin Lucy.

"I do like the light of the moon and stars," said Lizzie; "they seem to me to have such a calm, tranquil, *kind* look, as if they felt pity for the sufferings of us human beings—a pity controlled by the reflection that our sufferings are for our own good."

"One can almost imagine in some moods of mind," I remarked, "that they are the eyes of

"The angel guards watching on high."

"When I am alone," continued Lizzie, "under the moonlight or starlight, I am often carried back in thought to the

great indefinite Far Past. I am seldom under any circumstances affected in such a way by the sunlight ; its very vividness seems to force upon us the realization of the present, holding the mind to the contemplation of to-day. But the soft light of the gentle stars and the ‘melancholy moon’ seem to induce, or, at least, to give leave to the mind to linger in its own realms undisturbed by immediate earthly surroundings. At such a time comes the thought, As they shine upon me now, shone those beautiful orbs upon the little and the great, the evil and the good, who have lived through all time. Each hero, statesman, poet, patriarch, prophet, who lived in the past, even to the far dim ages, looked as I look now upon these heavenly lights, which presented to them the same appearance which they present to me.”

“And so have they appeared,” observed Cousin Lucy, “to every human being who has lived upon earth since the very dawn of time. And thus even the moon and stars, so far away from us too, unite in your view of them the whole human race.”

“All things in nature have that tendency,” I remarked, “because they all produce upon all the same influences, to a degree and with a power proportioned to the variety of human minds and hearts.”

“There are times,” said Lizzie, “and moods of mind when all these inanimate influences in nature seem to be endowed with a kind of vitality. The winds and the waters seem to talk to us ; and the various objects in nature presented to our sight seem to have, as upon faces, the expression of mind in its different moods.”

“They present the expression of mind,” I replied, “because there *is* mind in them, the mind of their great Creator ; and their influence upon us is for good, because they were made to do us good by the wisdom of the Divine Love. It is this Divine Love, giving impulse and life to all nature, that

“‘Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees ;
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent.’”

"That is a very beautiful thought," said Lizzie; "and we see at once that it is true. In its light we see God in all His works; and we see Him in a manner to awaken toward Him all the love of our nature."

"God is love," said Cousin Lucy.

"And that is the reason, Cousin Lucy," I remarked, "that it is so pleasant to love. Do you not think that it is pleasant to love?"

"Yes," she answered, enthusiastically; "love seems to me to be our very life."

"And what does Miss Lizzie say to that question?" I asked.

Lizzie looked at me with reproachful eyes. I felt that she did so, although I could not see her glance in the pale starlight, but her doing so was suggested to me either in the slight movement she made in turning toward me to answer my question, or else by my own conscious heart.

"I should agree with Lucy, entirely," she replied, "if we could control the selfishness of our own nature; and it seems to me that real love ought to enable us to do so. Alas! how very selfish we *all* are."

How self-reproached I felt; Lizzie had perceived that I was experimenting upon her love by instituting a comparison between her and Cousin Lucy. I will do myself the justice to add that I was not aware of my own object till her manner informed me of it. "What a pure, spiritual mind must hers be," I thought, "whose perceptions are so delicate!" Cousin Lucy was evidently totally unconscious of this episode to our conversation, this bayou to our current of thought. The positions in which we were placed respecting each other enabled me to take Lizzie's hand in mine without being seen by Cousin Lucy.

"True," I said, pressing the soft, slight fingers which were held in mine, "we are selfish; and it is kindly providential—since it tends to our reformation—that our selfishness wounds ourselves more than others. Yet this very selfishness sometimes proves our high appreciation of the love of *one* human being."

The fingers that I clasped softly returned my pressure, as

they were gently withdrawn from mine. Nothing more wins our love or strengthens it when won than being understood, being appreciated, not only as to the higher and better qualities of our being, but even as to our own weaknesses.

It was long after I laid my head upon the pillow that night before I fell asleep. This mystery that attached to Lizzie, this "all" that she had so nearly told me upon impulse, but had declined to tell me upon reflection—what was it? The sweet conviction that she loved me, and which pervaded and softened all my musings on the subject—aided by the weariness of my physical nature—at length soothed me to slumber. But dreams reproduced in fantastic forms all that had agitated my thoughts previously to the coming of sleep.

It was later than usual when I awoke next morning. When I came down stairs I found that the Yankee peddler had already established in the piazza a temporary shop for the sale of his wares. His stock was not confined to tin ware, but comprised various other articles, as combs, handkerchiefs, knives, strings of beads, and a number of other things. Among his customers had been Aunt Mary and the young ladies; but he was now engaged with the negroes, who made their purchases for the most part as children, buying at the prices asked whatever pleased their fancy, when they had money enough for the purpose. I seized the opportunity to add to my popularity by making to each such trifling present—suited to my purse—as pleased them. Cotton handkerchiefs printed in the most dazzling colors were mostly the choice of the women and girls. Some of the men and boys preferred knives, others pocket-handkerchiefs; red and yellow were the favorite color for the latter. While I was engaged with the peddler's wares Uncle Weatherby came out, and from his more ample means purchased presents for every one.

"I swon," said the peddler, when our purchases were finished, "if this don't beat all nature. Tarnation lucky thing for me, squire, that old bowl or goblet there—beg pardon, old fellow—Porringer—put me out of my road. Made an all-fired good business of it; could hardly have done better at Saint Joseph's, I guess. I musn't forget the present I promised him."

Here he picked out from a pile of articles a large covered tin bucket with a wire handle.

"Here," he said, "is something to carry your victuals in, old Porringer, when you go to work, or any where. I swon if there ain't something in it that'll make you jump when you see it. But, as I'm naturally modest, and don't like to be thanked too much, you musn't open it till I get out of the lane into the public road; and I leave it under the squire's own charge not to let you have it till then; colored people are so all-fired curious."

"Thank you kindly, marster," said Porringer—adding to the negroes around him, but loudly enough to be heard by every one, "I tell you what, that peddler is a real gentlum arter all. Now, dat way uv doing is sumpin like; he don't bear malish any how."

The ghost of a smile flitted across the Yankee's face.

After breakfast the peddler jumped into his wagon and drove away. Travers, whose horse was prepared for him to ride to the academy, only waited to see what was in Porringer's bucket. Cousin Jack was also still at home: Crowley had been sent on to the academy early in the morning with his dinner and books; but he had been allowed to remain at the request of his teacher, who had promised to take him behind him on his horse. All of the white family were waiting on the piazza to see the opening of the bucket; for there was a general impression among us that there was a Yankee trick inside of it. As soon as it was handed to Porringer, he pulled the top off. What appeared to be a large black snake immediately jumped out and struck him in the face.

It is difficult to describe the scene that followed. Those who understood that it was only a toy-snake moved by a spring, and no real serpent, that had struck Porringer, were laughing immoderately; those who thought it was a "live" snake that had been placed there by the Yankee, for the sake of revenge, were screaming and running away. Of the former were all of the white and a few of the black folks; and of the latter were the rest of the negroes, who had never before seen such a contrivance. Cousin Jack was fairly dancing with the

fun, as he called it. Porringer himself was begging first uncle and then each of us in turn to get some medicine to give him quickly, to keep the snake-bite from killing him. At length, however, composure and order were re-established, and every body was made to understand that it was only a joke.

At first Porringer was violent in his abuse of the peddler, and could not find words sufficiently expressive of his sense of the indignity that had been imposed upon him; but as he grew calmer he began to fancy that, "arter all," the present was not such a bad thing.

"It'll do fust rate," he remarked generally to those around, "to scare or make fun fur de darkies—one or turrer, or bofe."

It occurred to him, I suppose, that the possession of the article would cause him to receive a warmer welcome at the negro frolics.

CHAPTER XLVII.

AN EXCURSION.

A Ride to the River-shore.—Cousin Lucy.—The Mocking-bird.—A Punster *malgre lui*.—Scintillations.—To Point Quiet.—More Flashes.—Happy Moments.—Nature's Influence.—Claraqua.

SOON after Travers left, Cousin Walter and I invited the young ladies to take a ride down to the river-shore. It was yet early in the morning, a pleasant breeze was stirring, and our way would be mostly in the shade along the skirt of the forest-land before mentioned as lying to the southward of the dwelling at Old Delight. The young ladies accepted the invitation, except Miss Jane Wilton, who pleaded indisposition—a slight headache—as her reason for preferring to stay with Aunt Mary. I suspected that Mr. Travers's absence had some influence in her decision.

The horses were soon brought, and the party mounted. Cousin Walter accompanied Miss King and I Lizzie; Cousin Lucy sometimes rode with one party, sometimes with the oth-

er, but more frequently by herself. After leaving the Cherry-tree Lane we traversed the open public road for a few hundred yards, and then struck the road before mentioned as winding along the edge of the forest. Then we took a broad cart-track through a field in which some of the plantation-hands were engaged in cutting down the tobacco preparatory to "housing" it. Leaving this field, a steep road, cut through the high bank of the river, led us down to the shore near the mouth of St. Peter's Creek. All the previous way we had moved in a rather swift canter, and our company had kept closely together, but when we came upon the shore we stopped a while to take at leisure a view of the beautiful prospect that spread before us. Quite a fresh breeze was stirring the waters that alternately flashed and darkened in the sunshine near and far, and the billows breaking on the beach kept singing their sweet wild music—sweet and wild, whether loud or low.

Cousin Lucy, after lingering a while with us, contemplating the scene, shook her bridle-rein, and she and Pacolet were soon seen fleeting at some distance along the sands. Mounted on her graceful little animal, with her dark curls and long drapery floating in the wind, she presented a charming object.

"She is beautiful," said Lizzie, as if in answer to the look of admiration which I was casting after the fair rider; "you seem to admire her very much."

"She is, indeed," I answered, "and good as she is beautiful. Who can help loving her that knows her? Do you know, Lizzie, that the way in which you speak of Cousin Lucy in connection with me produces a queer idea in my mind?"

"What is it?" she asked.

"As if," I replied, "you would be pleased that I *would* be a *little* unfaithful, to counterbalance *something else*."

"That is ungenerous in you, Clarence," she said, blushing all over her face.

"I only tell you," I remarked, "what *will* occur to me at such times. I put no faith in the idea."

"Let us talk of something else, then," she said, "and do

you try to get rid of such ideas as fast as possible. Is it not a sweet morning?"

"'Fair bridal of the earth and sky,'"

I answered; "and what a balmy atmosphere we breathe.

"'A dewy freshness fills the air.'

I can not say, with the poet, '*the silent air* ;' listen to the dashing waters."

"And hear the song of that mocking-bird," she said, "singing among the trees on the bank up there. He is singing his *own song*, not an imitation."

"I do not think," I observed, "that I ever heard a mocking-bird sing his own native song in a cage."

"He requires space—the free air—to sing it in," said Lizzie. "He becomes so excited in singing it that he rises in the air and sinks with the swell and fall of the music, and every motion of his wings harmonizes with the strain."

"From what I have noticed," I said, "the mocking-bird's native song is sung only as a song of triumph after the achievement of some difficult imitation."

"Hallo, there!" called Cousin Walter (he and Miss King had left us without our being aware of their doing so); "see where Lucy has gone. She must not keep so far away from us; let us go on toward Point Quiet."

We started after them in a free gallop along the sands, but soon, becoming interested in conversation, we unconsciously slackened the pace of our horses. After a while we saw Miss King and Cousin Walter waiting for us; they had overtaken Cousin Lucy, and she was with them.

"Lizzie," said Miss King, laughing, "I wish to tell you and Mr. Audley something that occurred just now. I had unintentionally, in talking too fast, told Mr. Weatherby something that I should have kept to myself."

"It was nothing of importance," interrupted Cousin Walter.

"Now do not interrupt me again, if you please," she said, with a smile. "Well, having in my hand a wild rose, which

Lucy had just gathered from a bush that grew out of the cliff and given me, I handed it to him, saying, ‘To show you the importance I attach to your silence, I present you with this rose, the emblem of secrecy.’ ‘Let us waive all ceremony,’ he replied, ungallantly throwing my gift into the water. The very wave blushed for his rudeness as it received the flower. I laughed so heartily at the idea of Mr. Weatherby making a pun—”

“I did not intend it for a pun,” said Cousin Walter.

“I laughed so heartily,” Miss King continued, shaking her riding-whip at him playfully, “that he declared there was nothing so surprising in *his* making a pun, asking me why I was like Jane Wilton’s head? Of course, I answered ‘Because I am a King (aching).’”

“That reminds me,” I observed, “of the Hungarian noblemen’s ‘*Moriemur pro nostro rege, Maria Teresa,*’ which may be liberally rendered—to suit the occasion—‘We will die for our Maria Teresa King.’ That is your name in full, I believe?”

“Yes,” she said, bowing and smiling. “Well, I told Mr. Weatherby that I could make a pun on his name too, and put it, as he did, in the form of a conundrum. He defied me to do it. Now can you tell me why he, being a favorable specimen of his family” (Cousin Walter bowed), “is like a barometer?”

“ ’Tis something about the weather,” suggested Lizzie.

“Because he is good to show the *weather by*,” said Miss King.

We all laughed heartily at these “ridiculous efforts,” as Cousin Walter called them.

“Do you and Lizzie, Mr. Audley, keep nearer to us,” said Miss King; “Mr. Weatherby and I may need you to keep the peace between us.”

Again we pressed forward closely behind them, and so we kept within a short distance of each other till we gained the spot where the Point begins to curve out into the river. Cousin Lucy had arrived before us and dismounted, having fastened Pacolet to one of the dwarf cedars. She was standing, when we came up, closely to the water’s edge, holding up

with her hands the long skirt of her riding-dress. How graceful and fairy-like she looked!

"Mr. Audley," said Miss King, "your cousin Walter made another pun just now. He said, *à propos* to a remark I made during the discussion of a mooted question between us, 'Now we are coming to the *point*'—meaning, I suppose, Point Quiet."

"I declare, Clarence," remarked Cousin Walter, laughing, "I had no idea of a *double entendre*. Miss Teresa will force upon me the reputation of a punster, whether I deserve it or not. I am sure that I am not ambitious of such a title; the pun is said to be the lowest species of wit."

"I differ from that opinion entirely," I said. "A pun is not wit, but the vehicle of wit; it may be made a *mere* 'play upon words' carrying neither wit nor humor, or it may be made to convey both wit and humor of the highest order."

"I never gave the subject any thought," he responded; "but what you say seems to have pith in it."

At this moment Cousin Lucy came hastily toward us with some small object in her hand.

"See, Cousin Clarence," she said, "here is a small crab that has two shells, a soft and a hard one. Is it not queer?"

"Hand it here, Lucy," said Cousin Walter. "Let me see what it is."

"I will presently," she answered; "I am going to show it to Miss Lizzie and Cousin Clarence now."

"Is not that a *little shell-fish* (*selfish*), Lucy?" asked Miss King, in a tone that implied a double meaning.

Cousin Lucy blushed very prettily, but recovered herself almost instantly, and rejoined:

"What bird would Miss Teresa be like if she had an angle-rod in her hand?"

"A *King-fisher*," I answered.

"I feel compelled to remark, Lucy," said Cousin Walter, with a smile, "that that is bad, even as a first attempt."

"If I had the *rod* spoken of, Mr. Weatherby," said Miss Teresa, "I should feel disposed to present you with the smaller end of it, several times repeated, for that uncourteous remark.

But I hope, Lucy, that in such a case as you mention, I should, like other birds, alight upon a *perch*."

"You should have a *bough* (bow) for that," I said, lifting my hat.

"And the *spray* too," she added, pointing to the water.

By this time Cousin Walter had the little crab (of the kind called "peeler") in his hand; and he and Miss King were examining it.

"Can any of you tell me," asked the young lady, "what is the difference between a crab and death, according to Shakespeare?"

"Yes," replied Lizzie, "I was just thinking of the passage. Death, according to Shakspeare (see Hamlet), 'claws us in his clutch,' and a crab clutches us in his claw."

"I wish," complained Cousin Walter, "that you would all make haste and *finish* your puns and conundrums."

"Is not this a fin?" asked Miss Teresa, pointing to one of those articles on the peeler.

"Yes," said Cousin Walter.

"Then," she continued, "I see that your last remark, Mr. Weatherby, was a *crabbed* one."

"And yours about the perch," he retorted, "was a *scaly* one."

"Speaking of *scales*," said Miss King, "'Who can tell how how hard it is to *climb* yonder cliff?'"

"Speaking of *scales*," I answered, "that is a *weighty* question. It depends, to some extent, upon how heavy the person is who undertakes to climb it."

"I wish to get to the top of it," she observed, "to see the other expanse of the river."

"You need not climb at all to do that," said Cousin Walter; "it is only requisite to ride down to the extremity of the point. But first we must get Lucy on horseback again."

I immediately dismounted, before Cousin Walter could do so, and handed him the rein of Lady Lightfoot. Holding my hand in such a position as to serve Cousin Lucy for a step, I soon placed her on the saddle.

"I think, Clarence," said Lizzie, when I had mounted **Lady**

Lightfoot and rejoined her, "that you are very fond of ladies. It almost seems to me, at times, that you are too much in love with them all, generally, to be in love with any one of them in particular."

"It is the proper instinct of manhood," I answered, "to be kind and gentle to all women. But you did not make any such remark yesterday when I offered to submit to a drenching for Miss King."

"I do not know how to account for it," she said, "but somehow I am not afraid of any one but Lucy. Do you believe in warnings?"

"Sometimes," I replied.

"It seems impressed upon me," she continued, "that you and Lucy will be husband and wife."

"Sweet Lizzie," I said, "do not talk so—do not think so; it is so distressing to me. Did not my heart choose you even when a school-boy? I love Cousin Lucy, she is beautiful and good; but my love for you is different from that which I feel for any one else in the world. It is very singular that such thoughts should come into your mind."

"I love you, Clarence," was her only answer; "believe me, that, whatever may happen, I love you only. And I believe that you so love me; but hearts that truly love each other are not often united in this world."

Such expressions, more than all that she had ever said in apparent lightness of heart, bound me to her. How I worshiped her then; and she seemed to be consoled by the words expressive of perfect love that my heart's devotion poured out through my lips, for when we reached the extremity of Point Quiet her face was wreathed with joyous smiles.

It was a lovely scene that spread before us. A wide expanse of water lay on either side of us, each from two to three miles in width, and from five to six miles in length; the one to the south terminating in Rock Point, the other, to the north-east, in Sotterly Point. The river thus bended around the point on which we stood and which divided its waters to within a half mile of the opposite shore. Both expanses of the river lay fully before us. In some places the green-sward

sloped down to the very margin ; in others high cliffs towered above the wave. In some places the forest stood far back from the stream ; in others dense foliage drooped over the waters. A broad margin of white sand framed in each water-view.

“ Lizzie,” I asked, for we were at a sufficient distance from the rest of the party to avoid being heard by them by speaking rather low, “ will you allow me to quote some verses that I made and which the present occasion brings to mind ? ”

“ Do please, Clarence,” she said.

And I repeated the following :

“ Oh, joyous day ! oh, beauteous scene !
Who, in his wildest dream of bliss,
Beneath Italia’s summer sheen
Could frame a happier hour than this ?

Sweet notes around us rise and fall
From birds, and winds, and waters’ flow ;
And lovely views spread far, while all
Is bright above, as fair below.

And—oh ! beyond all mere delight—
My soul illumined by the eyes,
So softly dark, so mildly bright,
Which more than all the world I prize.”

“ Why do you not write such poetry about me, Clarence ? ” she asked, with a witching smile.

“ I was thinking of you when I wrote those lines,” I answered.

“ Do you know what my heart calls you, Clarence ? ”

“ What ? ”

“ My poet—you are so full of bright thoughts, so love all that is beautiful that is in the world of nature and of mind.”

The reader will pardon my dwelling upon such conversation as this. Every word of this kind that Lizzie uttered on that memorable day fixed itself in my mind, and furnished consolation for lonely hours through the weary days that followed it.

“ What are you doing there, Lucy ? ” called Cousin Walter to his sister, who had ridden out to the extreme end of the point, and sat looking into the waters. “ Have you found something queer again ? ”

"I was only looking into the water," she answered, "and noticing that it is never still, always moving on—on."

"What is the reason," asked Miss King (we had all drawn together around Cousin Lucy), "that our gaze is so fascinated by running water?"

"Ask Clarence," remarked Cousin Walter; "I heard him say once, that whenever we are affected by natural scenery, it is because it corresponds to, or harmonizes with something in our own minds."

"Of course," said Miss King; "it can not be otherwise. But to what in our minds does water in motion correspond, Mr. Audley?"

"We can not always define our emotions," I answered. "I expressed the opinion which Cousin Walter speaks of without pretending to the power of showing the correspondence in every case, or even in any. Running water may affect us because it suggests the current of thought and feeling in the human soul. *That* current also never ceases to move; day and night, in waking and in sleeping, it still goes on; and though comparatively but a small portion of its strength seems to be given to the purposes of our daily life, yet its unceasing action tends to keep the waters of the mind pure and fresh."

"The flow of a stream," remarked Lizzie, "reminds me by contrast of the changes and passing away of our earthly life. Our external appearance, our feelings, our modes of thought, are constantly going through changes; but the river ever flows on."

"Your remark, Miss Lizzie," said Cousin Walter, "recalls to my mind a passage in some verses which I was reading this morning:

"'Ah! time and tide will not abide the will of man, whate'er its might;
Yet, did they leave our hearts the same, but little should we seek their
flight.'"

I started with surprise.

"Does the quotation sound familiar to you, Clarence!" he asked. "The verses are, I suppose, of your composition. They are in your handwriting, and I found them on your writing-table this morning."

He handed me a piece of paper.

"Do, Mr. Weatherby, read them aloud," said Miss King. "I have heard that Mr. Audley writes poetry, and am very desirous to become acquainted with at least a specimen of his writing."

"Shall I, Clarence?" asked Cousin Walter.

Lizzie and Cousin Lucy also expressed a desire to hear the verses read.

"Your interest is so flattering, ladies," I said, "that it would be rude and ungrateful for me to refuse. It is a little ballad which I wrote before I came down stairs this morning, and is founded upon a passage in the early life of Mr. Worthington with which, I suppose, you are all acquainted. He told me of it himself yesterday, in answer to an expression of surprise on my part that one apparently so fitted for domestic life should never have married."

Cousin Walter read as follows:

CLARAQUA.

A BALLAD.

We walked beside the crystal tide of fair Claraqua, smiling bright.
Beneath the moon's enamored glance, the stars of tranquil summer
night;
The languid billow softly sighed responsive to the wooing breeze,
And at our feet the waters beat a mimic music of the seas.

The flowers' bloom, a soft perfume, sweet atmosphere around us shed;
But sweeter far the sphere of peace that 'round our souls the angels
spread.

Within the lakes of thy bright eyes the heaven of my love I traced,
While hand in hand we paced the strand, and in that clasp our hearts
embraced.

Hope's pencil bright, in hues of light, the future of our fortunes drew;
The earth was ever more to bloom, the skies for ever to be blue.
So pledged I thee in all my love's warm eloquence of language, tone;
While thou each word didst make accord unto the music of thine own.

Ah! time and tide will not abide the will of man, whate'er its might;
Yet, did they leave our hearts the same, but little should we reck their
flight.

O'er many a year we pledged to bliss my heart has rung a funeral chime;
They leave to me but memory in mourning for that happy time.

Again I stand upon the strand of fair Claraqua flashing bright;
Again the moon doth calmly shine, the stars look down with tranquil
light;
The winds are soft, the flowers are sweet, as on that blissful night of yore,
But to my heart they can impart the charm of hope and joy no more.

For now beside Claraqua's tide alone I stand, alone to pine
That now I clasp no trembling hand, no gentle eyes look up to mine;
No loving voice to mine responds in tender words and melting tone;
No fond heart, pressed against my breast, gives warmer pulse unto my
own.

Oh! thou art gone; the form, that shone a glorious presence like the day,
Has now in earth no part except to sanctify some feet of clay;
And every hope that springs from time, and every joy the world can
give,
Are gone like thee—they died to me when that bright form did cease
to live.

Of course, I had to promise each of the ladies a copy of the ballad; and I give it here as throwing light upon the history and character of Mr. Worthington.

"That is the only instance I have ever heard," said Cousin Walter, "of such faithfulness in actual life. But Mr. Worthington is an extraordinary man."

"Without making any pretensions," observed Lizzie, "he devotes himself to doing good among his neighbors."

"And his kindness of heart," added Cousin Lucy, "is so universally felt, that I do not believe he has an enemy in the world."

I was pleased to hear these tributes to the worth of a man whom I so highly esteemed, and to whom I owed so much.

"It seems to me," said Miss King, "that the heat of the day will be upon us if we do not soon return. See, the cliff even now scarcely covers the beach with its shadow."

So we started on our return, keeping, at the special request of Miss Teresa, all together, and moving in an easy canter.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

KNIGHT-ERRANTRY.

The Challenge accepted.—The Passage at Arms in Sport.—Chagrin of the Discomfited.—Over the Fence.—The Rencontre in earnest.—Bloody Results.

THE fresh breeze from the water and the elastic motion of our steeds were delightful enough to have inspired older hearts than ours with a joyful flow of spirits. As we passed through the field where the "hands" were cutting down the tobacco, Lizzie, Cousin Lucy, and myself were a little in advance of Miss King and Cousin Walter, but near enough to make conversation general—the light tread of our horses making but little sound on the green-sward of the "balk" along which we were riding.

"Those are three good riders ahead of us, Miss Teresa; do you not think so?" asked Cousin Walter.

"Yes," assented Miss King. "How gracefully they sit their steeds! Mr. Audley rides like a knight-errant."

I turned around in the saddle, raised my hat, and bowed to her.

"Speaking of knight-errantry, Cousin Walter," I exclaimed, in joyous abandonment, "what say you to imagining for the nonce that our riding-whips are lances, and tilting at each other for the love (and amusement!) of 'ladyes fayre'?"

"Have at you," he answered gayly, catching some of my own wild spirits, "when we get into the next field, which, being covered with smooth sward, affords better footing for our horses than this plowed ground around us."

The ladies heartily entered into the frolic. With what trifles are we pleased when our hearts are young and buoyant!

When we entered the adjoining field Cousin Walter and I galloped some two hundred yards apart, and then, wheeling, faced each other, waiting the signal—the waving of Miss King's handkerchief—to charge.

The field of this mock tourney was bordered on the western side by the tobacco-ground, from which it was separated by a worm fence, and on the east by the forest-land before mentioned; at the southern end the forest grew up nearly to the fence, from which it was separated only by a road that, skirting the woodland, passed through a gate in a high "stake-and-rider" fence at the northern end of the field, and joined the public road.

The signal being given, we charged at full speed, bearing directly against each other. Neither Cousin Walter nor myself being willing to waver, a collision that might, and probably would, have resulted in injury to one or both of us, seemed inevitable. But in the very "nick of time" Lady Lightfoot, being daunted, perhaps, by the greater bulk of Bay Surrey, or more probably being alarmed at the terrified shriek of the ladies, flew the track and avoided the encounter; and we passed each other harmlessly.

"That was the fault of your mare, Clarence," said Cousin Walter, when we had recovered ourselves, and were riding up to the group of ladies. "She is not so perfectly under control as I thought."

"I will keep her straight next time," I said, "if you will consent to another joust."

But the ladies protested against a second trial, declaring that they would have objected to the first, had they been aware that there was any danger. Cousin Walter, also, showed no disposition toward another tilt, saying that he had no desire to risk either his own neck or mine.

"My blood was up—as the saying is—that time, Clarence," he added. "But you will gain nothing by a second effort, as I should be on my guard and get out of your way."

I was all on fire with the thought that the ladies might attribute my defeat to a want of control over my animal, or to a failure of nerve, or, worse than all, even to timidity on my part; and I looked about for some means of convincing them that neither of these was the cause of Cousin Walter's triumph. A way presented itself.

"Cousin Walter," I said, pointing to the fence that divided

us from the public road, "what do you say to a flying leap? Do you think that Bay Surrey can do it? Are you willing to undertake it?"

"Excuse me, Clarence," he answered; "I prefer to let well enough alone." That fence is higher than the gate you jumped last week. I advise you not to attempt that leap; I certainly shall not."

"You avoid my challenge then," I said. "*I shall not only undertake it, but do it.*"

The ladies joined their expostulations to his that I should not make the attempt. Lizzie and Cousin Lucy implored.

"I hate to cause you any pain, ladies," I said; "but there is no danger; Lady Lightfoot can certainly make the leap; and it will be over in a moment."

It was certainly very discourteous in me to persist in my intention in defiance of their entreaties; but I was determined, at all hazards, to convince them that timidity formed no part of my nature. Moreover, I felt sure that I should succeed; and I knew that their uneasiness would soon be ended. Without any farther delay, therefore, I put the mare at the fence at full speed. I felt that there was danger in the undertaking; and the need of coolness and nerve brought them. Thus, in my management of Lady Lightfoot, there was nothing to intimate to her animal instincts any doubt of her ability to achieve the task I set her, but, on the contrary, every thing to assure her of success. The leap was a splendid one, the top rail being cleared (I could feel that) by several inches.

The very moment after I had made the leap, the following conversation—as reported to me weeks afterward—occurred among the party whom I had left.

"Mr. Weatherby," asked Miss King, in a nervous manner, "do you see those two gentlemen on horseback coming down the hill toward the lane leading to Old Delight?"

"Yes, miss."

"Whom do you take them to be?"

"I can not 'make them out' well at this distance; but one of them, I think, is Lucas, and the other—"

"It is Mr. Morton," exclaimed Miss King, in great excite-

ment. "Make haste! Oh! for Heaven's sake, ride as fast as you can, all of you. They *must* not meet unless I am there."

"Who must not meet?" asked Cousin Walter.

"Mr. Audley and Mr. Morton. Oh! something terrible will take place, unless I am there to prevent it. Ride fast, all of you—all will help."

"What is the matter?" asked Lizzie. "Tell me, for the sake of Heaven!"

"No time—come on," said Miss King, hurriedly, urging her horse recklessly to a high speed.

The whole party dashed after her at full gallop, but as I had jumped the fence at the northwestern corner of the field—that nearest to the lane leading to Old Delight—and the gate was at the northeastern end, they had to make a considerable angle to gain the point to which the leap had brought me.

In the mean time I too, immediately on landing in the public road, had caught sight of the two riders. They were about to turn into the Cherry-tree Lane, but, seeing me, they passed it, and came toward me. In answer to a motion of Morton's hand, I advanced to meet them.

"Well met, Mr. Audley," said Morton, in much excitement, as we came together; "I was on my way to Mr. Weatherby's to see you. I have been informed, sir, that a person in your presence last Saturday attributed the apology which I made to you to cowardice, and that you did, either in direct terms or by innuendo, give assent to that view of the case."

"Your information is not true, Mr. Morton," I answered. "I am not capable of such meanness."

"My informant is a lady, sir," he replied, "and I believe that she spoke the truth, and that you lie."

At the same moment he put his hand into his pocket.

Without time for thought, and instinctively, as it were, I twisted the lash end of my riding-whip around my right hand and brought down the handle end, loaded with lead, upon Morton's forehead. The blood was scattered over his face.

Seeing that he had drawn a pistol, I drew back the whip to repeat the blow, but at the very instant that the second blow was given he drew the trigger. A sensation like the shock from a galvanic battery passed through my left side. My second blow felled Morton from his horse, but he arose again almost instantly to his feet. I sat erect for a few seconds after receiving his shot; then a sense of weakness pervaded my whole body, I reeled in the saddle, and fell to the ground.

Lucas, during the whole scene, had neither spoken nor stirred. Morton and myself, in the excitement, had not noticed the advancing party, but they reached the spot at the moment of the catastrophe. A vision passed before my eyes, as in a dream, of persons springing from horseback, and loosened steeds galloping away, and I heard shrieks and harsh words mingled. Soft arms were supporting me, gentle tones uttering words of pity, and grief, and affection, when the stern voice of Cousin Walter roused me from the state of unconsciousness into which I was sinking.

"Shame on you, Lucas!" he cried; "seize the murderer!"
The next instant he grasped Morton by the collar.

A strong desire that no injustice should be done on my account, enabled me, after some effort, to say,

"Let him go; he but acted in self-defense; I made the assault. Whatever happens to me, do him no harm."

In the mean time the blood, which was welling up from the wound in my side, began to show itself through the light summer dress which I wore, and the last words which I heard ere I became totally unconscious were Lizzie's:

"Quick! quick, Mr. Weatherby!" she cried. "Oh, Heaven! he is bleeding to death."

I learned afterward that Cousin Lucy fainted at sight of the blood which realized to her my danger; Miss King stood a while as if transfixed to stone, and only moved for some time afterward mechanically, as it seemed, as she was directed to render assistance. Lizzie alone of the three ladies showed presence of mind in the emergency; her strong desire to see me taken care of braced her up to thought and action; but the reaction afterward caused her a spell of illness.

Cousin Walter and Lucas succeeded in temporarily stanching the flow of blood by compressing pocket-handkerchiefs against the wound at each orifice, for the bullet had passed entirely through the side. The former then hastened to the house, informed uncle and aunt of the misfortune that had occurred to me, sent Crowley for Dr. Turner, and had a litter made of two settees lashed together with a feather-bed placed upon them. Four negro men, called from the field, carried me on this to the house, where I was immediately laid upon a bed, and my dress removed. Morton also was attended to; he was taken to the house, the blood washed from his head and face, and his wounds dressed. A neighboring magistrate, who had been sent for, after hearing a statement of the circumstances, released him on bail entered into by Lucas and Dr. Turner, the latter of whom had arrived about an hour after I was wounded. Bail would not have been taken till it was known whether my life was in danger, but for the solicitations to that effect of Uncle Weatherby and Cousin Walter in accordance with the request which I had expressed.

It was a great relief to all to learn from the lips of the physician that my wound was not necessarily mortal. The probabilities were perhaps against me, but, judging from the orifices of the wound, Dr. Turner said, the bullet may possibly not have touched any vital part.

CHAPTER XLIX.

Convalescence.—Friendly Visits.—The Camp-meeting.—The sudden Alarm.—The “Man of Sperrit” suffers.—Practical Illustration of “People’s” relative Appreciation of Body and Soul.—The Shouter.—“My Soul’s snug enough.”—The Widow Tonnihill’s “Experience.”—“Nix comerous.”

A WEEK of pain and fever and occasional delirium passed. My father’s family had been notified of my misfortune, and the news left Locust Hill again to the care of housekeeper

and overseer and servants. Aunt Mary and Cousin Lucy had been unremitting in their affectionate attentions to me. They and my mother (my sisters, and brothers also, were too young to perform such duties), either together or by turns, watched by me through the days; and my father, Uncle John, Cousin Walter, and the neighboring gentlemen sat up with me, two or three at a time, through the nights. With such kind and assiduous care, under the guidance of a skillful surgeon, my constitution suffered no drawback for want of help; and Dr. Turner, at the end of the period mentioned, pronounced me to be out of danger. The faces that had tried to seem to me cheerful and full of confidence were now cheerful indeed. And so my sickness was not all pain; it gave me the delightful conviction that I had many loving friends. Most of the neighbors had been to see me, and constant inquiries had been made in messages sent by negro servants. The slaves on the Old Plantation had shown much interest in my illness; many of the oldest had at times been allowed to see me; and all had a kind smile and a pleasant word of congratulation for me when I was again able to make my appearance out of doors.

A day or two after the doctor had pronounced me to be out of danger my father's family returned home. It was evident, notwithstanding the pressing invitation of uncle and aunt to them to remain, that their presence with the children rather overcrowded Old Delight, especially with the frequent visits of the neighbors to that hospitable homestead; and, as the younger children were not content to go without their parents, all returned to Locust Hill together. But an almost daily messenger came from them to learn how I was improving in health.

It was nearly two weeks before I was allowed to come down stairs; but a day or two after I was declared by the doctor to be out of danger my improvement was so rapid that he permitted me to converse freely with the friends who called to see me. Mr. Worthington, after this permission, was with me almost every day; and I had long conversations with him on the subject of religion—conversations which I think have benefited my whole life since. Nor were the joyous face and comic

stories of Major Sullivan wanting to cheer my hours of confinement ; and from Travers and Lucas I learned the news of St. Joseph's and the county-seat. On Thursday of the second week of my illness—the first day on which the doctor had allowed me to sit up—all these friends were announced at once. I was sitting in a large old-fashioned easy-chair in my room when they were shown in.

It did me good to receive their evidently sincere congratulations. Mr. Worthington's greeting was, as usual, kind and gentle ; the old major's, hearty and boisterous ; Travers's, cordial and manly, and accompanied by a quotation from Horace ; but in Lucas's, although friendly and kind, there was some appearance of doubt intimated as to its reception. My open and impressively friendly manner reassured him.

"Upon my word, young Audley," said the old major, "it is really very pitiful to see your face looking so thin and white ; and less than two weeks ago you seemed the very 'picture of health.' But I say, youngster, you will soon be all right again now ; and to help you on I have picked up some good things to tell you of the camp-meeting."

"It seems to me," I remarked, "that I heard something of its being broken up in a hurry, by a supposed case of Asiatic cholera occurring on the grounds."

"It was no case of Asiatic cholera," observed Travers. "A poor fellow who had eaten too many crabs had the colic, which Dr. Jackson pronounced to be the epidemic. Dr. Turner was afterward called to the man, and tried to allay the excitement by assuring the people that it was not Asiatic cholera ; but he was too late ; they were already frightened too much to receive another idea, and the tents had to come down."

"It was one of our friends of the packet-boat, Clarence," said Mr. Worthington (he had now learned to address me familiarly, and it was very pleasant to me to hear him call me "Clarence"), "Mr. Wilson, the unfortunate man of 'spirit,' as Captain Koster called him. He was much more scared even than he was during the 'flaw.' It was but a slight attack of colic, and Dr. Turner's remedies soon relieved him."

"I was standing," said Lucas, "before a tent in which a prayer-meeting was going on, when I heard Tom Sussex call across the opening of the tent to Jack Wild (both of them were on the walk within the inner circle of the tents), 'I say, Jack, there's a fellow got the cholera in Dixon's boarding-tent.' He spoke in a clear, loud voice. Immediately all the sounds of worship and lamentation ceased; every body hurried out of the tent, and in fifteen minutes afterward the camp was being broken up."

"I say, you young Lucas," said the major, "that was one of the good things I had to tell Clarence, and which you have taken out of my mouth, sir. But you don't know what the preacher who was holding the prayer-meeting, the Rev. Mr. Brown, said to me about it. Brown is a good and sensible man, and almost always makes my house his home when he comes to this part of his circuit. 'What do you say to that, friend Brown?' I asked, alluding to the sudden desertion of the tent. 'Ah! major,' he answered, 'it only shows how much more people think of the salvation of their bodies than they do of the salvation of their souls.'"

"A very sensible remark that of Mr. Brown's," observed Mr. Worthington. "But, upon my word, major, I do not see how you can call any incident that illustrates the weakness of human nature, 'a good thing.'"

"Maybe you are right," said the major, with a chuckle; "and I hardly know whether I ought to tell Clarence of the negro nurse who got to shouting. She had her mistress's baby in her arms, and was standing near the rope that separated the white and black divisions of the camp, when the negroes began to sing 'Old ship Zion, hail!' She commenced in a low tone to join in the song, and slightly to raise and sink her heels without taking her toes from the ground; but, as the music became louder and more exciting, her voice, too, arose, and her motions became more energetic, until, a gentleman—her master, I suppose—having come out of a neighboring tent and taken the child from her arms, her springs became higher and brought her nearer to the rope, until a very high leap carried her over it, and she joined the African throng, who were by that time in a marvelous state of excitement."

"The negroes are very fervid and enthusiastic in their religious services," observed Mr. Worthington, apologetically.

"So Brown said," responded the major, "when I mentioned the incident to him. He told me, also, as a farther illustration, that, early last spring, at the negro meeting-house in Smithville, they broke several benches, overthrew the stove, and knocked out all the glass from one of the windows. 'But,' he added, philosophically, 'we have to submit to these things—it is one of the ways our colored brethren have of enjoying their religion.' "

"One day," said Travers, "when the horn sounded for the afternoon service, the 'colored brethren' were singing 'Play on the Golden Harp' so loudly, and shouting and jumping so excitedly, that they did not notice the call of the horn. The preachers were all gathered in the stand, and the white congregation seated before them; they waited for nothing but for the negro singing to cease. The blacks, however, were too much preoccupied to notice the state of things. After some consultation among the preachers, Mr. Brown arose, and, facing the rear of the stand, said, in his loud and strong nasal voice, 'Our colored brethren will endeavor to control their feelings; the hour for afternoon service has arrived.' There was a cool matter-of-fact expression in his tones, and the effect was wonderful. The singing was instantly hushed, and all was at once quiet and order."

"Charley Brydon, one of the class-leaders in the lower district," said Major Sullivan, "pressed me to attend an 'experience meeting,' held in one of the tents. He so insisted that in fact I was forced by a sense of politeness to accept his invitation. I witnessed some rich scenes there. Some of the experiences 'given in' were very affecting, and awakened my sympathy; but two of them—those of Sam Lethering and the Widow Tonnihill—were remarkably original, to say the least. 'Brother Lethering,' said the class-leader, 'tell us what the Lord has done for your soul.' 'Brother Bryding,' answered Sam—you don't know Sam, Clarence; he is a screw-faced, cross-eyed little fellow, and has a queer way of twisting his face when he speaks. 'Brother Bryding,' said Sam, 'tain't

no use for me to say nothing ; 'cause you knows, and I knows, and my wife Polly she knows, that my soul is snug enough.' The widow's 'experience' required a few more words. 'Sister Tonnihill,' said Mr. Brydon, 'tell us what you have to be thankful to the Lord for.' The Widow Tonnihill is a little nervous, wiry, energetic-looking woman. 'As to that matter, brother Brydon,' she answered, springing from her seat, and speaking in a quick, sharp voice, 'I should like any body to tell me what I have to be thankful for. There's my oldest son, Jim, is ben gone to the West now nigh on to six months, and I ain't hearn a word from him ; and my other son, Tom, is so tuck with the fever naigger' (fever and ague) 'that he's hardly ben able for a'most a month to do a mite of work ; and there's my darter Katy, young as she is, is a'most all the time down with the rheumatics ; and every thing falling on a poor old body like me, that's barely able to creep about. I'd like to know what I've got to be thankful to the Lord, or to any body else, for.' And down she sat in the same nervous, hasty manner in which she had arisen."

"It appears to me," observed Mr. Worthington, "that there is a deep pathos in the 'experience' of Mrs. Tonnihill; her case is, indeed, a pitiful one, the more so that she views it in such a light, and bears her burden in such a spirit as you describe. One who did not know you, major, would suppose that you intended to make a jest of religion, or at least of the Methodist church. Although I must acknowledge that, as a sect, they have degenerated from the purity and unselfishness of character of their early days, it is but justice to say that they have done many good works. Wesley's revival was very much needed, and put life into many 'dry bones.'"

"I agree with you entirely," replied the major, with a smile at Mr. Worthington's warmth, and a sly wink at me, intended, I suppose, to save his dignity at the rebuke. "I love goodness wherever I meet it ; and I also love a joke wherever I find one. You remember my saying, Clarence, on Sunday before last—when Susan gave me a brief lecture for telling jokes on the Sabbath—that one of the best jokes I ever heard was told to me on a Sunday by our parson himself."

"I do," I answered, "please tell it to us now, major."

"Whether 'you all,' gentlemen," began the jolly old major, "will think it as funny as I have pronounced it, there may be some doubt; but the parson himself seemed very much tickled at it. A gentleman in one of the upper counties of the state—we will call him Snooks, for convenience—was very desirous to be nominated for Congress by his party, which had a majority in that Congressional district. So he either wrote himself, or induced a friend to write a flaming article, recommending him to the party for that post, and sent a copy of it to the party paper in each of the three counties composing the district. All of them published it. Quite elated, Snooks boasted of it wherever he went. The parson himself, who was on a visit at the time in the county where the Congressional aspirant dwelt, heard him speak of it on one occasion. 'This is an instance, gentlemen,' added Snooks, after informing them of his nomination, 'that a prophet is *not* without honor except in his own *county*; for the editor in one of the adjoining counties heads the announcement "*Vox populi, vox Dei*," and the editor in the other introduced it with "*E pluribus unum*;" but this confounded fellow at the county-seat says "*Nix comorous.*"'"

Aunt Mary, hearing the loud laughter that followed the major's "last," now came into the room and said that the doctor had left directions that I must not be allowed to become too much excited; even a hearty laugh, she added, might re-open the wound so lately healed.

When the rest of the gentlemen took their leave, Lucas lingered behind them a few moments.

"Audley," he said, "you must not misunderstand my behavior on the morning of the unfortunate rencontre between you and Morton. My not interfering was caused only by want of presence of mind, the whole affair took place in so short a time. Though I had consented to act as his friend in case of a regular meeting between you, I assented to do so merely because he first called upon me. I declare that I was governed by no unfriendly feelings toward you; on the contrary, I much prefer you to Morton."

I thanked him for his consideration for me, and assured him that, as I had never done an unkind act toward him nor spoken an unkind word of him, I had never supposed for a moment, notwithstanding appearances, that his feelings were unfriendly toward me.

"Morton," continued Lucas, "has suffered much from remorse since he learned that, so far from saying of him what he had heard, you had, on the contrary, taken his part—so to speak. I have heard him say several times that he would prove to you his regret for what he has done."

Aunt Mary now returning to the room after having accompanied the other gentlemen down stairs, Lucas also took his leave.

CHAPTER L.

THE RUNAWAY.

Ike on an Errand again.—Weather-bound at the old Log School-house.—The White Spirit and the Black Spirit.—Tied up.—Ike disappears.—Jarboe's Disappointment.—The Runaway returns.—Charles Audley.

It was late in the afternoon of the following Saturday that Cousin Walter and Cousin Lucy, having recently been taking a ride down in the Neck, came up stairs to sit with me awhile.

"It is so pleasant, dear Cousin Clarence," said my sweet little cousin, "to see you sitting up again, and looking somewhat like your former self."

"My recovery will be much due to you, my sweet cousin," I replied. "I wonder if, though I should live a hundred years, I should ever forget my dear cousin Lucy's kindness? But all have been very kind."

"Every body is kind to you, Cousin Clarence," she responded, "because you are kind to every body."

Cousin Walter laughed.

"When you and Lucy have finished your compliments to each other, Clarence," he said, "I have something to tell you

which I think will amuse you, as you are interested in incidents illustrative of African character."

"What is it?" I asked.

"Did you know that Ike had run away?"

"No."

"He has both run away and come home again."

"How did it happen?" I asked with curiosity, for this was a new kind of incident to me.

"You remember, I suppose, that father promised Uncle Jim that if Ike was late another time in returning from an errand, he might punish him."

"Yes."

"Ike was sent, last Monday afternoon, over to St. Joe's with an order to get from one of the stores something that was wanting on the place; and Uncle Jim told him to walk, as it would take about as long a time to catch a horse and ride on the errand as it would to go there and back on foot. He did not return till next morning, and did not bring, then, what he had been sent for. He gave a remarkable account of his adventures. I happened to be in the field where the hands were at work when he returned.

"'What you got ter say fur yo'se'f now?'" said Uncle Jim.
"Perty pusson you is ter send on an arrand."

"'Why, you see, Uncle Jim,' said Ike, 'I started off ter go jes' as fast as eber I could; but, as I wus er crossing de branch jes' below de mill-dam, 'bout half way ter Sin Joe's, I turn' my foot on er roun' stone un sprain' my ankle. Dat hurt me so much dat I couldden hardly git ullong, un when I got ter Sin Joe's all de stores wus shut up. I didden know what ter do at fust; but then I thought 'twus bes' ter come back home uggin us soon us I could, so dat you moughten feel oneasy; but by de time dat I got ter de ole log school-house up in de woods it come on ter rain so hard dat I had ter go in dere ter git out uv de shower.'

"Here he made a short pause, to see, I suppose, the effect of his story.

"'Dat dere ain't gwine ter do wid me, nigger,' said Uncle Jim; 'case it stop raining long 'fore ten er clock.'

"No doubt 'bout dat fac', sah,' answered Ike, nothing daunted. 'But us I was tired er hobbling ullong wid my sore foot, I laid down on one uv de ole school-house benches un fell ussleep; but I didden mean ter let myse'f sleep long, un I didden. But when I wake up dere was two sperrits, one on each side uv me; de one on der right side wus er white sperrit, un de one on de lef' side wus er black sperrit. Un den de black sperrit say, "I'se gwine ter kill dis nigger;" un den de white sperrit say, "Oh, please don't, de poor fellow's tired." Un so 'dey kept dat up tell arter daylight; de black sperrit wantin' ter kill me, un de white sperrit wouldden let him. When de daylight come den dey went away jes' "ur-whiff!" un us soon us eber dey went away, I git up un run all de way home.'

"As Ike had already tried the Jack-o'-lantern and made a failure, the presumption is that he thought it safe, both on that account and for the sake of variety, to introduce spirits this time. More likely still, that, supposing that his case would, as usual, be brought before father, he thought that a marvelous story would bring him off again, if it were merely for the amusement it would afford. Uncle Jim soon set him right in that respect.

"You see here, nigger,' he said, 'you forgits yo'se'f; Marse John tolle me dat I mought 'ten' to de nex' case myse'. Marse Wat knows it. You may 'muse de white folks wid your foolish stories; but you ain't er gwine ter get off from me dat way. Den lemme see dat bruised ankle.'

"The ankle was not at all bruised. I suppose he had intended to let father find that out, and thus *flatter* him into letting him off. No doubt the fellow had fallen in with a pleasant party somewhere between Old Delight and St. Joe's, and spent the night with them. Ike looked very much 'crushed.'

"De ankle *wus* hurt las' night, Uncle Jim,' he said, expostulatingly, 'but 'tis got well sence den.'

"Don't you talk to me dat way any more, boy,' replied the old leader. 'Come here, little Sam, un help me tie him up.'

"So Ike was tied against a tree in the field, and whipped pretty severely with birch switches, but Uncle Jim declared that he hardly hurt him. Of course, I didn't interfere; I think he deserved all that he received."

"'Dat'll do fur de present,' said the old negro. 'I ain't gwine ter settle dis matter wid switches; I let de case stan' ober er while tell arter dinner, den I go to de house un git er cowhide, un den you jes' look out, 'case I'm gwine ter pay you fur dis time un de urrer too.'

"Uncle Jim thought, I suppose, that postponing a part of the punishment would be equal to doubling it, for Ike would suffer first in fancy, and afterward in fact; but when the hands came out to work after dinner, Ike was not among them.

"By father's direction I forthwith wrote a number of advertisements, offering thirty dollars reward for his apprehension, and sent Crowley to set them up 'at the stores and on the gate-posts on the public roads in the neighborhood.

"This morning Jarboe, the constable, rode up to the yard gate, and asked for father.

"'You see, Mr. Weatherby,' he said, when father made his appearance, 'you owe me thirty dollars.'

"'What for?' asked father.

"'Is that ar paper your own proper handwriting?' asked Jarboe.

"'No,' answered father; 'but it was written by my direction.'

"'Well, a gentleman of your edification, Mr. Weatherby, ought to know that you're as much responsible, sir, as if you wrote it with your own hand, for the law is very plain, sir, "Ki face-it per alum, face-it per se."

"'Do you dare to insinuate, fellow,' exclaimed father, quite excited, 'that I caused Walter to write that advertisement to avoid paying the reward to any person making the arrest?'

"'Not by no manner of means, sir,' answered Jarboe, a little alarmed. 'I never means to insinervate any thing against a gentleman, sir, and every body knows that Mr. Weatherby is one of 'em.'

"'Then what, in the name of common sense, do you mean ?' asked father.

"'I mean, sir, that you can liquidate the remuneration just when it suits your convenience.'

"'You have arrested the boy, then, have you ?'

"'Why, bless your life, Mr. Weatherby, any body can see that,' said Jarboe, with a quaint grin on his face. 'Can't you see him on the horse behind me ?'

"'Look for yourself,' said father, laughing. He began to understand the affair, knowing that Ike is very slippery.

"Jarboe was evidently confounded when he found that Ike had given him the slip. The disappointment was no doubt great to the worthy constable, for to him thirty dollars is no small sum.

"'I declar to man,' he said with emphasis, 'I had no idear of such a thing. Why, it war not five minutes ago that I war lecturing him on the imperpirety of his conduct, and rousing his imageration a little by informing him what a thurrer flageration he might sartingly expect when his marster had to pay thirty dollars on account of him. But don't you think, Mr. Weatherby,' he added coaxingly, 'that you ought to remuniate me some for my trouble ?'

"'Certainly not,' answered father; 'there would be no end to the price I might have to pay, if I adopted such a course as you propose. I promised to pay thirty dollars to any one that would arrest the boy and deliver him to me. Is not that what the advertisement states, Walter ?'

"'Yes, sir,' I answered.

"Father then invited Jarboe to come into the house and take some refreshment.

"'No, I thank you, sir,' he said, 'I has important duties to attend to. I declar to you, gentlemen, when I cogertate the pitch to which things is gitting in what we calls civerlized serciety, I serously think of abscising into retiracy among the abergoines of the county. Good morning, gentlemen.'

"He said this with a great affectation of dignity as he turned and rode away. Whether he meant the last part of his remarks to imply his indignation at Ike's playing him

such a slippery trick, or at father's refusal to pay him for nothing, I can not tell. More probably still, perhaps, he intended to express, in a general way, his disappointment at not obtaining the promised reward.

"Ike came home a while ago. He said that Jarboe arrested him on the road-side near St. Joseph's, and that he slipped off the horse where the road passes through the nearest piece of woods to Old Delight, and while Jarboe was delivering the lecture he had referred to. The boy says that he has been living on fruits and berries for nearly five days, and was very anxious to get hold of meat and bread again. He is now taking a late dinner in the kitchen. He said, 'It wouldden do ter let marster hab ter pay any reward for him; dat's de reason he gib Mister Jarboe de slip, ter save marster de money.'

"Father says that what he has suffered by running away is punishment enough to deter him from doing so again, and that the whipping which Uncle Jim had already given him was sufficient for the previous offense. But the entreaties of mother and Lucy, I think, helped to bring him to this decision. Of course, Uncle Jim is very much dissatisfied, and, I think, with justice."

"I think that father is right," remarked Cousin Lucy. "It is always best to be sure that, if we err at all, we err on the side of mercy."

"As the case is settled," said Cousin Walter, "'tis not worth while to dispute your position; but I am of the opinion that weakness is often called mercy. By-the-by, father thinks, from Ike's story, that Jarboe is entitled to some pay, and intends to send him one half of the offered reward by Jack when he goes to school Monday morning."

"Uncle is always generous," I remarked. "The missing the reward is a great disappointment to the poor fellow; and, indeed, the boy might not have returned but for his arrest by Jarboe."

"I think that is probable," said Cousin Walter; "at any rate he might not have returned so soon."

"Cousin Walter," I asked, after a moment's silence, "has Cousin Charles Audley been to see me since I have been sick?"

"No," was the answer. "Charley is himself confined to bed. On the afternoon of the very day on which you were wounded he was violently thrown from his horse, in a race which he was taking with Jack Wild while they were both under the influence of drink."

"If he has been in bed ever since," I said, quite alarmed, "he must have been very seriously hurt. I hope that he is not in danger."

"Dr. Turner attends him," was the reply, "and we hear from him almost every day. The doctor does not apprehend any serious result."

Cousin Walter soon after left the room.

CHAPTER LI.

EXPLANATIONS.

Talk with Cousin Lucy—Delirium tells Secrets.—Lizzie's Illness.—Are Morton and Lizzie engaged?—Good News.—Pleasant Visitors expected.—The Clouds breaking.

Cousin Lucy and myself were left alone together. I had often wished during the lucid intervals of my sickness, and had been longing since my convalescence, to ask after Lizzie; I was always thinking of her; and it seemed strange that no one had said a word to me of the family at Crystal Cove. Had any one from that place been to see me? had any messages of inquiry concerning the state of my health been sent? But the timidity and *mauvaise honte* natural to youth in affairs of the heart had prevented me from making inquiries that might be understood as having reference to a subject the most interesting of all to me. This was another good opportunity to ask, and Cousin Lucy the very person to make inquiries of; for, if my charming little cousin (vain simpleton that I was) entertained toward me feelings more than cousinly, it would be a kindness, and, indeed, an act of justice too, to her to let her know my love for Lizzie. While I was considering

how I could best introduce the subject, Cousin Lucy herself spoke.

"Cousin Clarence," she began, blushing, and with some confusion of manner, "I have something to say to you; but it is upon a subject so delicate that I am almost afraid to speak. And yet I made it a special request of mother that I might undertake the task, because there are some explanations that I am, perhaps, best qualified to give."

"You have no cause, dear cousin," I said, "to entertain any feeling like fear toward one who owes you so much love and gratitude."

"You owe me nothing, Cousin Clarence," she answered; "it has been such a consolation to me to be of service to you in your illness. But," she added hesitatingly, "I wanted to speak to you—about—You said a great many things in the attacks of delirium caused by your fever."

"Did I?" I asked excitedly. "What did I say?"

"You spoke mostly of Miss Lizzie Dalton"—and a deep blush suffused her usually pale face as she spoke. "Dear cousin, do not be offended with us; we could not help hearing you—but mother and all of us—we know your secret."

"Whom do you mean by 'mother and all of us,' dear cousin?" I asked in some alarm.

"I mean no one not related to you," she answered; "though Dr. Turner, I think, guesses something. We tried to keep others from you when you talked in your delirium."

"I am glad that you know then, Cousin Lucy," I said, "I have been so anxious to inquire about Lizzie; two weeks almost is so long a time not to have seen her, not even to have heard of her. Are all well at Crystal Cove? Has any one of them been to see me? Have they sent to ask about my health?"

"There has been a messenger every day. Mrs. Dalton herself has been here several times, and saw you once or twice when you were asleep. Your secret being known, it was not considered safe to let you see her, especially while you were in a state so precarious, suspended as it were, between life and death."

"But Lizzie—she has not been here at all, then?" I said despondingly.

"Do not be alarmed, dear Cousin Clarence," said Lucy, with tender anxiety expressed in her tones and manner; "Miss Lizzie has been very sick; but she is now much better—getting well fast. It was her illness that prevented us from speaking to you of the family at Crystal Cove. But I can now assure you that she will soon be as well as ever; Dr. Turner told us when he was here not long ago that he had given Mrs. Dalton leave to take her out this morning in the carriage."

"Are you sure that she is getting well, cousin?" I asked with much earnestness and anxiety.

"Very sure," she answered smiling. "The news of your safety has given her new life, as it was your being shot so desperately that caused her illness. I am sure that she loves you deeply, truly, cousin. She did not wish to leave Old Delight while you were in danger; indeed, the anxiety which she exhibited made her feelings no secret to any one in the house. Her mother, who hastened here as soon as she heard of the affray between you and Mr. Morton, had some difficulty in inducing her to return home with her."

"Poor, dear Lizzie," I said, "how much she must have suffered! Are you certain, Cousin Lucy, that she is entirely out of danger?"

"Yes, indeed; the doctor said that when he was at Crystal Cove this morning she was looking quite bright and happy at learning that you were sure to get well."

"You are a dear, good cousin," I said. "You do not know how much good you have done me."

"I have something else to tell you," she said.

"What is it, cousin?"

"You remember, perhaps, that I was in low spirits for a while, on the morning of the party at the Channel oaks?"

"Yes."

"I hardly knew what was the matter with me then; but I understand now. It was instilled into my mind, so to speak, by what Lizzie said of you the night before (for, of course, she made no intentional intimation even to that effect), that

you were in love with her; and I was troubled on your account, for I knew that she was engaged at that time to Mr. Morton."

I recalled instantly what Miss King had told me at the church, and what Lizzie herself had said about telling me "all." "Is it possible," I thought, "that it is true? Cousin Lucy says, 'I knew.'" The expression of my face alarmed my gentle cousin.

"Do you feel worse, cousin?" she asked anxiously. "Will you lie down again? Let me call mother."

She started to leave the room.

"Come back, Cousin Lucy," I exclaimed hastily; "you must not leave me in any farther doubt. How did you know that Morton and Lizzie were engaged?"

"I was on a day's visit at Crystal Cove," she answered, "a week or two before you came to Old Delight. Lizzie and myself went up stairs to her room after dinner, as the day was warm and languor-inspiring, to lie down and read. She soon fell asleep. I became interested in my book, and so kept awake; and at length, thinking that I should find the air cooler in the back porch down stairs, I went down there. I became drowsy there after a while and fell asleep. I was awakened by the voices of Mr. Morton and Mrs. Dalton in conversation. 'It is time, dear madam,' he was saying, 'that Lizzie should appoint a day for our marriage.' Mrs. Dalton said something about its being time enough for that, and that Lizzie was quite too young to marry. I heard no more, for as soon as I could fully arouse myself I hurried up stairs, knowing that I had no right to listen. All that I did hear, in fact, was in the act of being aroused from sleep."

"Are you sure that you were not dreaming, dear cousin?" I asked.

"Very sure, indeed," she answered. "Many little things, almost impalpable, have since convinced me that there was an engagement, but, I am sure, a very unwilling one on Lizzie's part. But you need not feel troubled about it, Cousin Clarence; that engagement, I feel assured, is now broken off. Lizzie is now convinced that she does not love him; and she is too

true, too just to him, as well as to herself, to marry him without love. Before Lizzie left here, the day you were wounded, Mr. Morton came to us, as we were standing together, and said to her, in a melancholy tone (I pitied the poor man, as much cause as I have to dislike him), ‘I suppose that you look upon me as a murderer?’ ‘Mr. Morton,’ she answered, with singular energy, ‘I wish never to see your face again.’”

“What you tell me, sweet cousin,” I remarked sadly, “affords but little, I should say (but for my treacherous heart, that listens to mere feeling too much) *no*, consolation to me. If Lizzie assented to the engagement with Morton—unless there were circumstances which forced that assent—she can not be honorably released from it except with his consent. His *rencontre* with me is no cause for breaking it; for he only acted in self-defense. He would not have been to blame even if I had died. I suppose that there is some mystery about the matter not yet explained. I am glad that you did not hear Lizzie herself say that she was engaged to Morton.”

“Indeed, Cousin Clarence,” replied Lucy, in sympathy with my sadness, “you have no cause to feel otherwise than happy. Father and mother, and brother Walter, and I may add, myself, are all convinced, from the frequent inquiries from Crystal Cove after your health, from Lizzie’s sickness, from the way in which Dr. Turner speaks of his two cases, and especially from Mrs. Dalton’s manner when here, that Mr. Morton and Miss Lizzie Dalton are no longer engaged.”

Cousin Lucy and the rest of the family not being aware of *my* engagement with Lizzie, existing at the same time, could not see, of course, any trouble for me in the affair; it was now no time for me to tell them. “Is it possible,” I asked myself, “that Lizzie can be a coquette—one of that race so heartless, to say the least; and that she has been ‘trifling’ with Morton? I can not believe so.” No, I could not think so; from all that I knew of her I could not believe it possible. Circumstances, if explained, would, I felt sure, show her blameless. That she loved me, I could not for a moment doubt; and, notwithstanding the involving mystery, there was great comfort in that knowledge.

Aunt Mary came into the room soon afterward.

"I declare, Clarence," she said, in her bright, cheering way, "you improve so fast" (the reader knows why my cheeks were flushed) "that I expect soon to see you going about again as hearty as ever."

"I wonder," I said, "when the doctor will let me go down stairs? I do so want to get out of this room, where I have been a prisoner now for almost two weeks. And yet, dear Aunt Mary, notwithstanding the pain I have suffered here, I shall always cherish pleasant memories of this room, connected with the kindness and love shown to me here by you, and all of you. But, indeed, I feel quite strong enough to go down stairs, and I should so like to go."

"I am glad to tell you," said Aunt Mary, with a smile that showed how much pleasure she felt in giving pleasure, "that Dr. Turner says that, if you are no worse, you may go down stairs to-morrow morning."

I expressed my delight, and said that I felt sure that it would do me good.

"I have other news, fully as pleasant if not more so, to tell you," she continued. "Lucy, my child, go down and hasten supper before it is dark. Bring some up for Clarence when it is ready" (for Aunt Mary did not allow the servants to bring up my meals while I was sick, but she and Cousin Lucy attended to me themselves). "Do you feel any appetite, Clarence?" she added, as Cousin Lucy left the room.

"I feel quite hungry," I said, thinking that the statement would give her pleasure; "chatting with Cousin Walter and Cousin Lucy seems to have had with me the effect of exercise. But what is your still more pleasant news, dear aunt? I am anxious to know."

"A few moments since," she answered, "I received a note from Mrs. Dalton, in which she says that—as Lizzie took a short drive this morning, which did her good—she and that young lady are coming over early to-morrow, if the morning be suitable, to spend the day with us, if we are not all going to church. I wrote, in return, that we should be very glad to see them, that your uncle and myself would certainly pass the

day at home, although it was probable that Walter and Lucy would go to church. I also took the liberty of saying," she added, with a smile, "that they would be certain to find you at home."

"I shall be so glad to see them," I said, filled with delight; "and Miss Lizzie—we were so much together, and I have not seen her for so long a time."

Aunt Mary looked at me with a conscious smile, and I looked away from her with a conscious blush. I had spoken from impulse—"rashly," as Hamlet said,

"Rashly—and praised be rashness for it."

"I have still more news to tell you, Clarence," she continued. "Miss King's father has come for her, and she starts for Ohio with him on Monday. Mrs. Wilton told me the other day that Miss Teresa has been very much troubled about the affair between you and Mr. Morton, and said that every thing in this neighborhood reminded her of her thoughtlessness in having brought it to pass. (She calls it 'thoughtlessness,' but 'sinfulness' would be a more suitable word; for it was she who said to Mr. Morton what so enraged him against you). So she wrote to her father to come for her."

"When Mr. Morton," I observed, "said that a lady was his author, my mind immediately reverted to Miss King."

"There is something still stranger," continued Aunt Mary. "Mr. Morton is going to the West with Mr. and Miss King. He has made Mr. Lucas his agent to sell all his property in this county, and settle all his business; as he intends to live permanently in the West. This last piece of news I have just heard from Walter, who learned it during his ride this afternoon from Mr. Lucas, whom he met on the road."

All of Aunt Mary's news looked bright in promise for me.

The sun had just gone down, and glorious hues of red, and gold, and purple covered sky, and land, and water. I looked into the magnificent west and wrought beautiful and happy visions of its gorgeous lights. One doubt only lingered: what was this about Morton's engagement to Lizzie? But that doubt I soon drove away—so many facts conflicted with it; and no shadow fell upon my waking or sleeping dreams that blessed eve and night.

CHAPTER LII.

CONCLUSION.

Expectation.—The Arrival.—Happy Meeting.—Mysteries explained.—Arrangements for the Future.—Disposal of the “Characters.”—A Glimpse into the After-times.

THE unusual fatigue of sitting up so long a time on Saturday afternoon and evening, added to the exciting nature of the subjects which had occupied my mind and heart, caused me to sleep till late the following morning. I was awakened by Uncle Porringer, who had been sent up to help me to dress. As the old man was not much accustomed to act in the capacity of a valet-de-chambre, and as I was desirous of looking my best on account of the anticipated visit, the process of donning my clothes occupied considerable time, and was not quite completed when Cousin Walter came into my room to see how Porringer had performed his task, and to learn whether I was ready for breakfast. The family breakfast had been over for nearly an hour; and Aunt Mary would not yet have had me disturbed, but that she knew how disappointed I would be if the visitors from Crystal Cove should arrive and I be unprepared to meet them.

As soon as I had finished the morning meal, I seated myself at the window opening toward the public road, and looked out on the cherry-tree lane to watch for the expected carriage.

The morning was beautiful and cloudless; the air was soft and balmy, and a gentle breeze made pleasant music in the locust and poplar trees that bordered the yard. Sweet odors arose from the flowers; and the songs of the birds were heard, at intervals, in the trees of the yard, the garden, and the orchard. Far away over the fair fields the broad bosom of the Clearwater gleamed brightly in the morning light; and the hills and plains on the opposite shore took mingled hues of misty blue and golden—blue from the distance, golden from

the sunshine. Over all the heavens and the earth, the beautiful day spread the glory of a tranquil joy; and my heart was as bright and joyous as the day.

It was not long before the carriage from Crystal Cove arrived. Uncle and aunt, and Cousin Walter and Cousin Lucy met the visitors at the gate. How my eyes feasted upon Lizzie's form—the broad leghorn hat concealed her face—as, between Cousin Walter and Lucy, she came up the walk from the gate to the house. Her step had not its usual elasticity, but its feebleness made her, if possible, more interesting to me.

Cousin Walter soon came up stairs to help me down, yet my imagination made the time seem unusually long, and I was on the point of undertaking to go down stairs without help when he made his appearance. He assisted me to the parlor door, threw it open, and considerately left me. Only the visitors from Crystal Cove were in the room; Mrs. Dalton had a bright and kind smile upon her face; Lizzie was thinner and even paler than usual, but what a sweet and happy light looked brilliant in her large dark eyes.

"Oh dear, dear Clarence," she exclaimed, throwing herself into my arms with all the abandonment of a true affection.

This before her mother justified my blissful anticipations.

"Sweet Lizzie," I said, as I pressed her to my heart, "this is indeed happiness."

Mrs. Dalton's presence was a check upon the full expression of my joy.

The reader anticipates that there is need to detain him but a little longer. Mrs. Dalton stated to me that Lizzie had, after I was shot, made her acquainted with the state of affairs between us, and that she had come herself, in justice to her daughter as well as to myself, to explain all that might seem to me mysterious.

Mr. Morton had been a very devoted friend of Mr. Dalton in the lifetime of the latter, and had attended to his business for him while in bad health. The estate of Mr. Dalton had previously become involved through bad management, and Morton had paid all claims against it. At the urgent in-

stance of Mr. Dalton, a mortgage had been executed to secure to Morton the sums that he had advanced; and on the death of the former, his friend became executor by his will. When in the spring previous to my visit to Chittering Neck Mr. Morton expressed to Mrs. Dalton a desire to make Lizzie his wife, the mother had freely given her assent; and the daughter, yet so young and having no experience of love, had made no serious objection, but had always insisted that no particular day should yet be appointed for fulfilling the engagement. Mr. Morton had never spoken to Lizzie personally on the subject, as he was diffident toward her—a diffidence caused perhaps by the conviction of the experience of his much greater age, that she did not yet love him—it was easy for the young lady to prevent conversation between him and herself on a subject instinctively distasteful to her. Mrs. Dalton, on my first visit to Crystal Cove, had seen—or rather, perhaps, felt—with the quick instinct of a mother's love, the attachment between Lizzie and myself. Between her desire not to give pain to her daughter and her wish that the engagement with Morton should not be interfered with, she had acted with no decision. She herself had felt rather attracted toward me at first; and my rescuing her only son from death, together with the different incidents which had convinced her that her daughter loved me, had made her deeply regret the engagement with Morton. But she feared even to attempt to dissolve it; for—although he possessed much generosity of character—he was, when opposed, an impulsive, high-tempered man. All of the estate of her late husband was, however, in his hands; and, had he desired to do so, he could have ruined her and her children.

Mrs. Dalton, after making this statement, handed me a letter from Morton addressed to myself. As it was a very long one, I will not trouble the reader with more than an abstract of its contents.

He expressed great remorse at having wounded me, having learned since that I had never said an unkind word of him—and declared that he had been a murderer at heart, and that only the Divine mercy had prevented him from being a murderer in fact. As he was convinced that Lizzie loved only

me, he gave up all claim to her ; and, in doing this, he would do her the justice to declare that she had never deceived him, for she had never given him any reason to suppose for a moment that she loved him. He said that he was now aware of his selfishness in seeking this engagement when he knew that her heart had never been his; true, he had at the time of making it entertained a hope of winning her love, but he now knew that such hope was vain. To make the injury which he had done me return as much good as possible, he had directed his lawyer, Mr. Lucas, to withdraw the vexatious suit against Mr. Charles Audley—the original cause of his prejudice against me—and to pay all costs. For reasons which I could understand, he had determined to dispose of all his property in the county, and to seek a new home and new fortunes in the prosperous West. The letter closed with a wish for the mutual happiness of Lizzie and myself.

"What a high and generous nature is this!" I exclaimed, when I had concluded the second reading of the letter (I had read it first to myself, and then again aloud). "Mr. Morton is one who indeed does not do things 'by halves.' He has more, much more than repaid me for the physical pain which he caused me to suffer," I added, as I took Lizzie's hand in mine and looked into her eyes.

"My Clarence also is generous," she said. "He is more; he is

"'Gentle, and brave, and generous.'

But I fear, dear Clarence, that you will think me deceitful. I should perhaps have told you how I stood toward Mr. Morton, but I was afraid that such confession might cause me to lose you; and then I was not sure that I had any right to make it. I acknowledge that I was wrong in becoming engaged to you under the circumstances; but I could not control my heart, and especially could not bear the thought of giving you an unexplained refusal."

"It is not I who can blame you, sweet Lizzie," I answered—“I whose happiness has been the result of your action. Of one thing I am very sure, that it would have been a great

wrong to have fulfilled the engagement with Morton when you learned, after seeing me, that you did not love him ; and I can enter fully into all your feelings, dear Lizzie—your fears, your doubts, your hopes—your *love*, that justifies all."

We were very happy.

"Mr. Morton has many good, indeed, excellent traits of character," observed Mrs. Dalton ; "he has a kind heart, when his passions are not aroused, and is always a true and devoted friend. But there is a certain sternness and darkness, if I may call it so, about his manners that forbids confidence and repels. Doubtlessly, every thing is for the best ; it is more than likely, now that I look upon things calmly, that Lizzie could never have been happy with him. Indeed, my dear Clarence, you have every advantage of him but wealth, the least important, when we look at it in a right light. I much prefer you for a son. I call you 'Clarence' already ; in the intercourse of many years I could never address him but as 'Mr. Morton.'"

It was settled that as soon as I was admitted to the bar our marriage should take place. The assistance that my father would be able to render us, and that which my intended mother-in-law assured me we might now expect from Crystal Cove (for that estate had been carefully managed by Morton, and had in the last few days been handed over by him to Mrs. Dalton free of incumbrance), would fully justify us in this arrangement. Aunt Mary, who had been called in to the consultation, assured us of the consent of my father and mother. They too had learned the secret betrayed by my delirium, and a conversation which aunt had held with mother on the subject proved that we need fear no opposition from Locust Hill.

Ten days from that memorable Sunday I took passage in the steamer at Belleharbor, and returned to Baltimore and to my studies. In the November of the following year Lizzie and myself united our destinies. I opened a law office in Baltimore, and, as I devoted every energy to my profession, and had many friends to second my own efforts, practice flowed into my hands, and fortune, of course, followed. Cousin Charles

Audley and Miss Bettie Sullivan were married during the spring preceding our wedding. Charley became a thoroughly reformed man ; his spell of illness before spoken of had broken in upon his intemperate habits and given him time for reflection, and his wife's influence had made sure his reformation. Four years after his marriage he died without direct heirs. In his will he left his widow the larger part of his personal property and a life interest in the estate at Audley Hall ; to me he bequeathed the reversion of Audley Hall and a sufficient number of "hands" to cultivate the place ; all the rest of his property, real and personal, which was large, he gave to my father. A few years afterward I purchased the life interest of the widow (who has now for almost twenty years been Mrs. Dr. Turner), and, retiring from the practice of the law, settled at Audley Hall.

As the reader will, perhaps, feel some interest in the other characters of my narrative, a few words may be given to them.

Two weddings, besides the one already mentioned, took place before my own : Cousin Walter and Miss Susan Sullivan, and Mr. Travers and Miss Jane Wilton were the parties. A year or two after my establishment in the county, Mr. Rollin and Miss Maria Wilton were married. What surprised us all was the marriage of Mr. Morton and Miss King, which took place in about two years after they went to the West together. Lucas has been for many years a confirmed bachelor, and still retains his old quarters at the county-seat.

Years ago Cousin Lucy was married to a fine young man, a planter in the lower part of the county, who has been for a long time and still is one of my especial cronies. Cousin Jack studied medicine, and, after graduating went to Mississippi to practice his profession : he now owns a large plantation in that state. Eight or ten years ago he took to wife Eveline Macgregor. The widow, who was then still a handsome woman, removed with them to the far South, and is still living.

All of my father's family still survive ; some wedded, others single ; some at home, others in different parts of the Union.

A year or two after the incidents recorded in this volume, Mayhew, the oyster-guard, removed with his family to the far West: it is said that they are living well there. But Miss Betsy Tree, his wife's sister, remained in the county—Miss Betsy Tree no longer, having become the wife of Mr. Jarboe, the man of her choice. The external appearance of the learned constable has been much improved since his marriage—a fact due to the taste as well as to the practical economy of his wife. He has also taken lately an upward step in life. Dr. Hiram L. Jackson, finding, after the practice of some years, the population of his neighborhood much diminished, and the practice of medicine become therefore “unremunerative,” as he says, devoted himself to politics. At our last election he was returned as sheriff of the county. He has appointed Jarboe one of his deputies. The worthy deputy, although he is now in quite comfortable circumstances, still occasionally threatens to seek refuge from the vexations of civilized life among the “aborgoines”—an expression by which he is supposed to refer to our most savage Indian tribes. As he is now a gray-headed man of more than fifty years, it is not much feared by his wife and friends that he will ever carry this oft-repeated threat into execution.

My mother-in-law is still living. She divides her time between Audley Hall and Crystal Cove, an ever-welcome and dearly-cherished inmate at either household. At the latter place Willie Dalton reigns, a gay young bachelor of thirty years.

The joyous old major lived his three-score-and-ten years; he died but a year or two since; his memory and that of his jokes is still, and will long continue to be fragrant in Chittering Neck. Mr. Worthington many years ago departed to the spirit-land; there, let us hope, he has again been united to his beloved maid of “Claraqua,” never to be parted more.

It has been more than fifteen years since Uncle Weatherby’s death. Aunt Mary still survives; she lives with Cousin Walter and his family at Old Delight. It does me good, in my frequent visits there, to look into her sweetly-placid face, and to hear her talk of past days and the husband of her youth, of

the heaven that is before her, and where she hopes again to meet him.

Of the "colored" characters, the younger ones all survive; Clotilda not by any means so eccentric as she used to be, now that she is the mother of a family; and Ike, her husband, reformed of all his evil habits—especially that of seeing ghosts and "Jockermer-lanterns"—and quite a good "*bey*" now of *forty* years. Crowley and 'Possum have also taken helpmates (Amanda is Crowley's wife), and still live upon the Old Plantation. Of the older servants, only Aunt Jinny and Uncle Porringer remain; the others, one after another, have gone to increase the number of tenants in the black people's graveyard in the orchard. Aunt Jinny still rules in the kitchen department; but Uncle Porringer has for some years given up all regular occupation. In the warm days the old fiddler and preacher—now preacher only in the lessons of life that to look upon him teaches—sits before his cabin door in the shade, and in the early spring and later fall, in the sunshine; but in the winter he finds a comfortable seat in the chimney-corner. In my visits to Old Delight I always call to see him; and my calls always inspire him with his old joke, for he invariably adds, after our cordial greetings, "I tol' you so, Marse Clarence; pretty young ladies in the Neck, sah." The old uncle seems always to think that my marriage to Lizzie gave him some claim to the honor of a prophet.

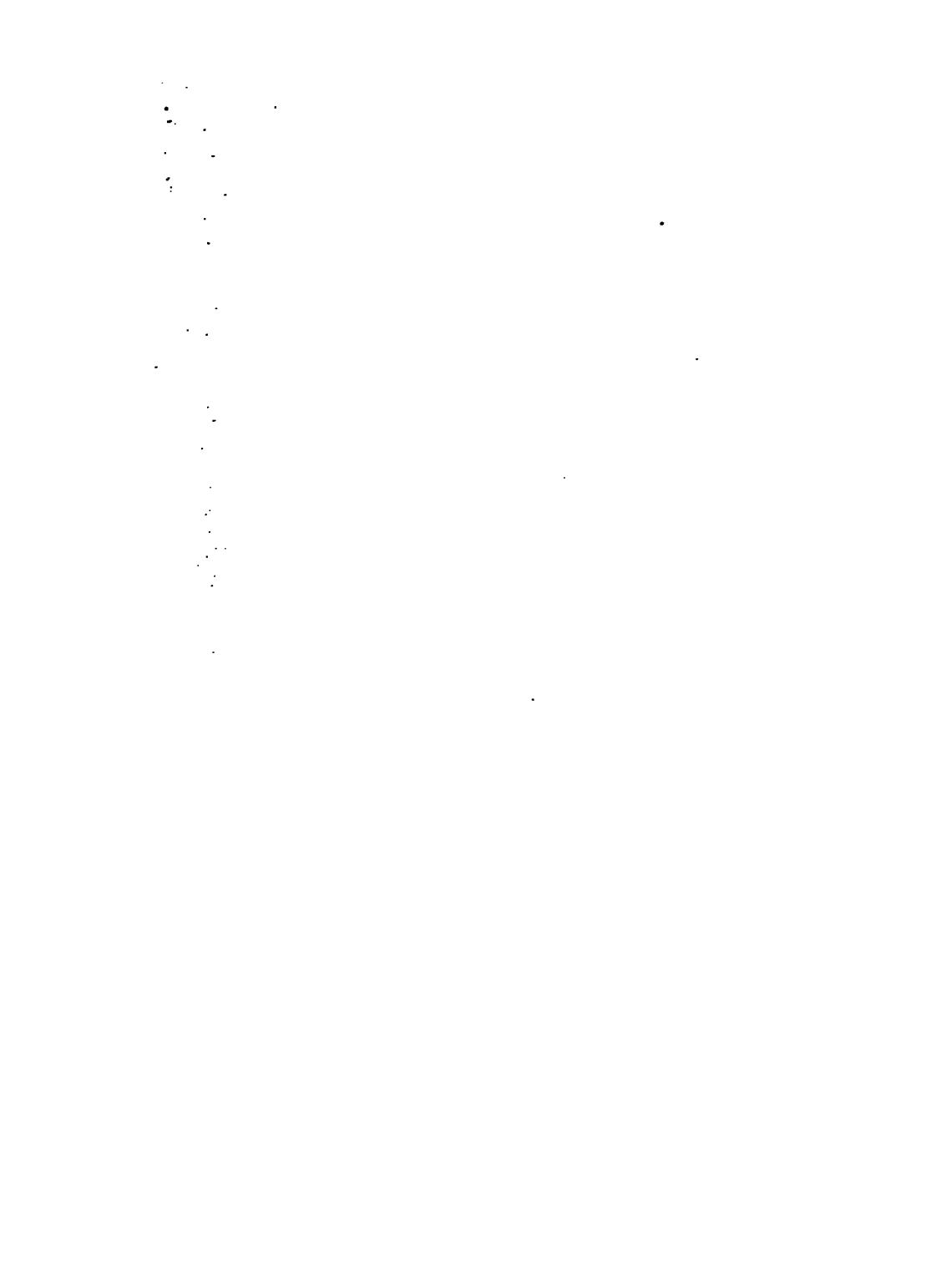
As I write these lines, closing the work of months, I sit at an oriel window which the taste of my wife has caused me to add to the library at Audley Hall. A wide and beautiful view spreads before me; creeks and river, and even a broad reach of the noble Chesapeake Bay, plains and hills and promontories, fields and forest-land can be seen from this window. The sunset, an hour that I so love, sheds a rosy-golden glory over all the scene. Sky and land and water are bathed in a universal glow of loveliness and light. I am falling away into dreams of the busy past—dreams of mingled pleasure and pain, which the scene before me, and the subjects which I have been writing of, all vividly recall; when the present sud-

denly takes a flush from all happiness experienced or dreamed of, as two arms, still white and beautiful, fall softly and caressingly around my neck; eyes whose lustre time has not dimmed, whose tenderness time has improved, look fondly into mine; and a voice whose music has been the spell of my life for many, many happy years, speaks words of congratulation on the completion of my first book.

"But do you not think, dear husband, that as you have made Clarence and Lizzie such prominent figures, it would be well to add something of our life since? that children, some of whom are older now than we were then, have grown around us; and that, except the natural grief which we have suffered at the departure of some of them into the spirit-world, the years have glided by for us tranquilly and happily?"

"Be it so, dear wife. And let me add, that it is your sweet influence—the beauty of the soul, of which that of the body is but a shadow—that has realized, in a quarter of a century's residence in the city and at Audley Hall, the happiness which was promised during a month's sojourn at The Old Plantation."

THE END.



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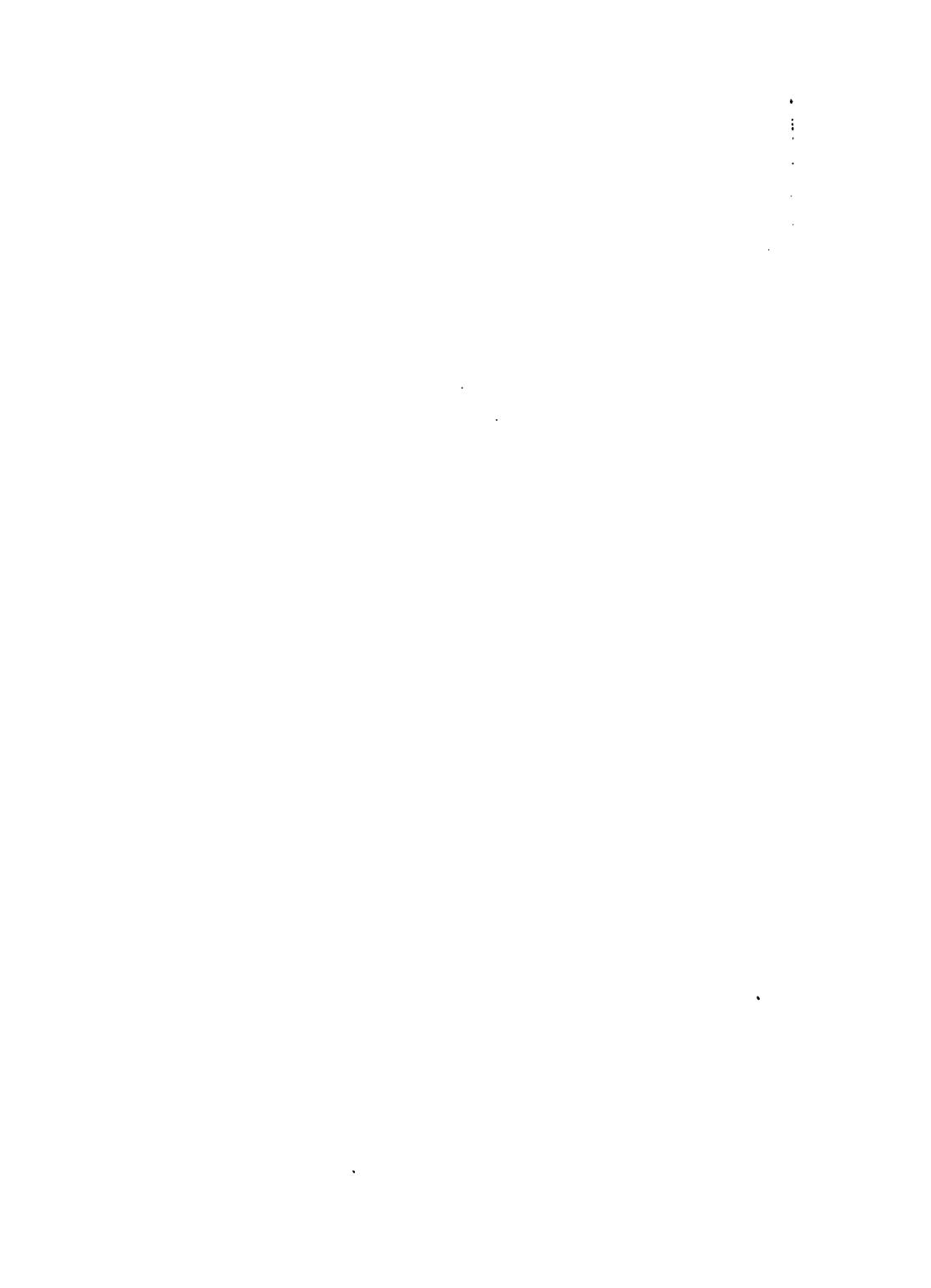
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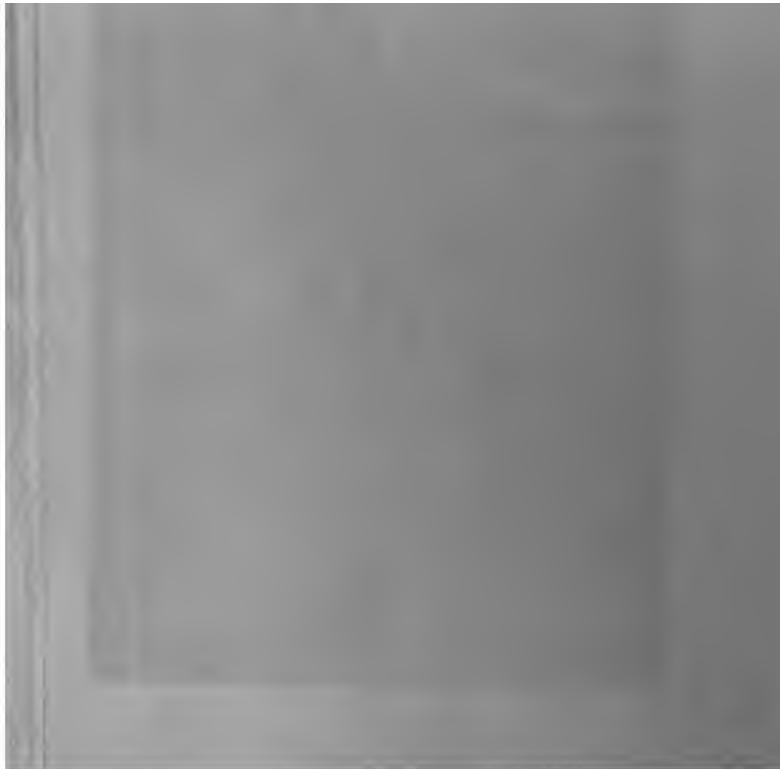
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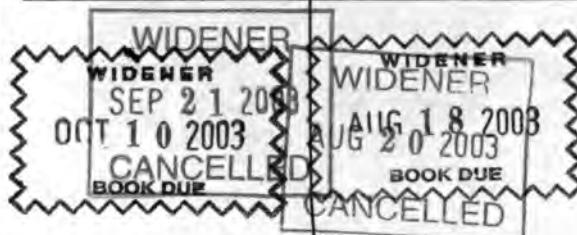
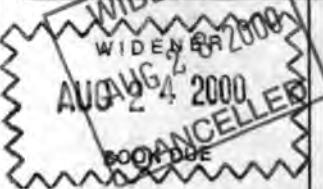


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